

## ***The Boston Red Sox Thursday, April 28, 2019***

### **\* *The Boston Globe***

#### **Birthday wasn't a banner day for Michael Chavis**

Alex Speier

Michael Chavis turned 24 on Sunday. He did not have a celebration to remember at Fenway Park.

After going 0 for 2 with a walk and a strikeout on Sunday, Chavis closed the homestand by going hitless over his final four games, going 0 for 12 with six punchouts. He is hitting .156/.206/.250 with two walks and 12 strikeouts in 34 August plate appearances.

Opposing pitchers have attacked him mercilessly with fastballs at the top of the zone since that became a glaring vulnerability. Over time, Chavis has become so focused on addressing that hole that he's created another, not only failing to do damage to pitches in his wheelhouse at the bottom of the zone but also chasing breaking balls that are below it.

"He's chasing up and chasing down. We talk about controlling the strike zone and he's not controlling right now," said Red Sox manager Alex Cora. "When he makes contact good things happen, even when he goes the other way. Right now, there's a lot of swings and misses."

While the bigger picture of his rookie season suggests a positive contributor — particularly given the boost that Chavis provided for a team in need of a jump-start when he was called up in mid-April — he's amidst growing pains that are typical for a player of his age and experience level.

The Red Sox have tried to help him navigate through them by giving him an increasing number of days off to take a step back and engage in behind-the-scenes work to tighten his approach, but as a player makes the transition to life as a big league regular, it's almost impossible to accelerate through early-career turbulence.

"Overall, if you look at his season, we'll take this," said Cora. "We'll take it and we know he's going to get better. As long as he keeps working with [hitting coaches Tim Hyers and Andy Barkett] and he understands his swing, his area where he can do damage and not expand, he'll be in a good place."

Rotation changes?

Change may in the offing for the Red Sox rotation. Asked whether Rick Porcello would make his next scheduled start, Cora did not offer a definitive course.

"We're going to talk about it [Monday]," said Cora. "We're going to map the [rotation] plan over the week."

On multiple occasions, Cora has noted that a coming cluster of days off — one this Thursday and another next Monday, the first of five off-days in a 19-day span — will allow the Red Sox to be "creative" in how they approach their rotation, whether skipping pitchers in the rotation or having them piggyback with multi-inning outings. The non-answer about Porcello suggests that veteran righthander could be subject to a realignment, though Andrew Cashner's ongoing struggles suggest that his spot likewise could be subject to adjustment.

Cora also said that the team had yet to decide if lefthander Brian Johnson would stay on turn to start the finale of the forthcoming three-game series in Cleveland on Wednesday.

Bannister is back

Red Sox VP of pitching development and assistant pitching coach Brian Bannister, who'd been spending much of the second half with the team's minor league affiliates, rejoined the big league team for the end of the homestand against the Angels. He is expected to remain with the big league club through the end of the season . . . In order to create a big league roster spot for Chris Owings, the Red Sox optioned righthander Hector Velazquez to Triple-A Pawtucket. The team moved first baseman Steve Pearce to the 60-day injured list in order to create a spot on the 40-man roster for Owings.

Taylor made

Lefthander Josh Taylor achieved career highs in strikeouts (5) and innings pitched ( $2\frac{1}{3}$ ) while retiring all seven batters he faced. Since being recalled to the big leagues in mid-June, he has a 1.98 ERA with 12.5 strikeouts per nine innings . . . Righthander Marcus Walden logged a scoreless, hitless inning, and has not allowed a hit to any of the last 30 batters he's faced dating to July 28. Opponents are hitting .194 against him for the season . . . As much as the Red Sox' struggles have fallen heavily on the rotation, the offense has faded significantly this month. During the team's 3-8 slide, the club has scored four runs or fewer in 9 of 11 games (not counting the 4-4 game against the Royals that was suspended in the 10th inning).

### **Chris Owings's first game with Red Sox doesn't go well**

Nick Kelly

Chris Owings was running to left field during a Saturday game in Toledo when teammates and coaches yelled at him from the dugout.

"I had actually thought somebody had gotten thrown out of the game, so they wanted me to change positions," Owings said.

Instead, Owings's Pawtucket teammates greeted him with high-fives. The Red Sox called up Owings while sending pitcher Hector Velazquez to Pawtucket.

That might have been the high point of the past 24 hours for Owings.

Owings, who has played in the majors for the Diamondbacks and Royals, made a less-than-inspiring debut with the Red Sox on Sunday against the Angels. The Sox inserted him into the leadoff spot as they gave outfielder Mookie Betts the day off, and Owings struggled.

Running on about three hours of sleep, he finished 0 for 5, striking out three times in the 5-4 loss.

The performance was a continuation of where Owings, who played second base Sunday, left off when he last played in the big leagues and why he was available for the Sox to sign to a minor league contract on June 17.

"I mean, it's one game," Sox manager Alex Cora said. "It's just one game. That happens at the big league level."

For Owings, it has happened far too often recently at the big league level.

The Royals designated him for assignment on May 31 after he finished with a .077 batting average over 12 games that month. In the game before the Royals moved on from him, he struck out four times in four plate appearances. He had not played in the majors since.

"That was a rough first two months," Owings said pregame. "Basically, once I got that phone call and got let go from KC, it was just . . . I really took some time to figure out what I needed to do differently. The

past two years have been a little tough, so I kind of went back to the drawing board and I think the results have paid off in the way I have been swinging the bat recently. Just kind of maybe understanding my swing a little bit better and being in a consistent groove as well.”

He entered Sunday’s game on a fairly consistent groove. He had been hitting well for Triple A Pawtucket over the 44 games in which he played. He registered a .325 batting average and hit 11 home runs, six of which came over six consecutive games in late July.

“I just think it’s more so not trying to do too much rather than trying to hit the ball out of the ballpark,” Owings said.

He didn’t seem to follow that approach against the Angels. Owings struck out swinging each time.

Cora said there was no thought as to pinch-hitting for Owings. The Sox, however, made clear that they were willing to try different lineup alterations in the close game — Mitch Moreland and Brock Holt entered the game to pinch hit at different points. Betts, the player whom Owings replaced in the lineup, even entered as a pinch-runner.

Yet a struggling Owings made five plate appearances.

Cora said he didn’t regret giving Betts the day off, however. But now the Sox head into a road trip after splitting the series with the Angels. With a record of 62-58, they sit 7½ games back of the second wild card spot.

When Owings arrived in Boston after taking a 5:45 a.m. flight, he met with Cora in his office. It was there that Cora told Owings he would not only play but lead off against the Angels. Cora also gave a bigger-picture outlook.

“We’ve got a shot to go to the World Series and you are part of it,” Cora recalled telling Owings.

That shot sure felt like a distant one come end of the game Sunday. For Owings to have a chance to be part of a trip to the World Series, he will need to perform much better than he did against the Angels.

So will the Red Sox.

### **Angels’ extra effort enough to beat Red Sox in 10**

Alex Speier

As he contemplated how a day off at the end of a stretch of 34 games in 34 days might help his team, Red Sox manager Alex Cora noted the limits of what might be accomplished with a long-anticipated day of rest.

“It’s not that we have secrets or we have magic dust that is going to fix everything,” said Cora.

A year ago, it seemed fair to wonder whether the Red Sox in fact had conjured supernatural forces to their cause. So many of the players who arrived at Fenway Park — whether midseason acquisitions like Nate Eovaldi and Steve Pearce, or players summoned from obscurity like Ryan Brasier, or even starring mainstays like Mookie Betts — were transformed into the best versions of themselves once they crossed the threshold to the Red Sox clubhouse.

That has not been the case in 2019 — and indeed, in many instances, the opposite seems to be occurring, a fact that has rendered any remaining hopes for the Red Sox season if not extinct, then critically endangered.

The Red Sox suffered a 5-4 loss to the Angels in 10 innings Sunday, a game decided when Anthony Bemboom pulled a two-out, RBI single to right against reliever Ryan Weber — the seventh Red Sox pitcher of the game. What had been a promising start to a four-game weekend series at Fenway for the Sox,

who won on Thursday and Friday, fizzled into another missed opportunity. A four-game split left the team staring at a 7½-game gulf between them and Tampa Bay for the second and last wild-card spot.

“It’s something we’ve been doing the whole season,” sighed Cora. “Been inconsistent. That way, it’s tough to make it to the playoffs.”

While the much-maligned bullpen ultimately was charged with both a blown save — Matt Barnes permitted a game-tying homer in the eighth — and then the extra-innings defeat, the loss was set in motion chiefly by the latest disastrous start from Andrew Cashner, a pitcher who’d been amidst one of the best seasons of his career (9-3, 3.83) with the Orioles prior to a mid-July move by the Red Sox to acquire him.

The righthander lasted just 1⅓ innings, facing 13 batters and allowing nine to reach base — three by hits, five by walks, and one by getting plunked. He became the 16th Red Sox starting pitcher in the last 100 years to walk at least five batters while failing to complete two innings, and the first since Daniel Bard on June 3, 2012.

Cashner threw just 47 percent of his pitches (24 of 51) for strikes — the lowest strike-throwing percentage in any start of his career. That alarming outing added to what has been a dreadful transition to Boston by the veteran, who has now forged an 8.01 ERA in 29⅓ innings with 17 walks and seven homers allowed over six starts.

“It’s been frustrating,” said Cashner. “But there is still a lot of season left.”

Yet it remains to be seen how much of that remainder will matter, particularly given the intractable struggles of the rotation. The Sox have gotten 18 starts of fewer than three innings — most in the big leagues by a team that doesn’t employ an opener.

Mostly, the Angels took advantage of Cashner on Sunday by laying off his offerings — but a pair of Shohei Ohtani singles, one in the first to load the bases in front of a run-scoring double play, and a bases-loaded, two-run single to center in the second inning — played a significant part in the Angels taking a 3-0 advantage.

But with the bases loaded and two outs in the second, lefthander Josh Taylor entered the game for Cashner and stabilized it with a standout performance, retiring all seven batters he faced — five by strikeout. That bought time for the Red Sox to assert themselves.

The Sox scored a run in the second when Angels starter Patrick Sandoval forced in a run with a bases-loaded walk to Jackie Bradley Jr., and then tied it in the fourth, when Christian Vazquez crushed a two-run homer (his 18th) over the Green Monster. The Sox eventually took a lead on a run-scoring passed ball in the bottom of the fifth.

Yet after scoreless frames from Marcus Walden (fifth inning), Eovaldi (sixth), and Barnes (seventh), Barnes could not sustain the effort over a second inning of work. The righthander’s 97-mile-per-hour fastball down the middle to Kole Calhoun got blasted into the visitor’s bullpen for a game-tying homer. The blown save was the 22nd of the year for the Red Sox (tied for most in the AL), and positioned the team to absorb its eighth loss in a game that it led after seven innings — likewise tied for the most losses of that variety in the league.

Still, the Sox had late opportunities to make the blown save a blip — most notably in the eighth inning, when Mitch Moreland worked a leadoff walk and was promptly replaced at first base by pinch-runner Mookie Betts. Vazquez popped out on a sacrifice bunt attempt (the catcher said he was attempting the sacrifice on his own), and Betts was caught stealing when pinch-hitter Brock Holt swung through a 3-and-1 fastball over the plate in what proved a scoreless inning.

“We made some decisions today that we don’t usually make,” said Cora, who expressed regret about an attempt by Rafael Devers in the first inning to steal third with Xander Bogaerts at the plate and one out. “We did some stuff that we shouldn’t do.”

There have been plenty of missteps of that sort by a Red Sox team whose players keep searching for solutions that seem either ill-suited or insufficient in scope to address the team’s shortcomings.

### **Frustrated Red Sox running out of games**

Dan Shaughnessy

The Red Sox foolishly rested their starting pitchers in March and April in expectation that they would have more in the tank for October.

Now there is not going to be an October, so Alex Cora probably will be able to shut down Chris Sale and David Price in the final weeks of this lost season.

Sunday at Fenway was one of those maddening losses that so typifies this annoying Red Sox season. The S.S. Dombrowski extended its trip to nowhere and made it clear that there will be no games for this team in October.

The Sox lost to the Angels, 5-4, in 10 innings. It took 4 hours and 2 minutes. The Sox left nine runners on base. Cora “rested” Mookie Betts against a lefty making his second start in the big leagues. Chris Owings, released by the Royals this year, hit in Betts’s leadoff spot and went 0 for 5 with three strikeouts (Owings fanned with the bases loaded to end the second). Andrew Cashner was a dumpster fire again, establishing that he is perhaps the worst midsummer acquisition in Sox history, and that he should never get the ball to start another game. Rafael Devers (running on his own) was thrown out trying to steal third base with one out in the second. Attempting to sacrifice (on his own) in the eighth, Christian Vazquez bunted a popup that had more hang time than a Ray Guy punt. After the failed sacrifice, pinch runner Betts was caught stealing.

And when it was over, there was still plenty of delusion.

“We’ve got a good team, we really do, regardless of what our record says,” said Matt Barnes, who gave up a game-tying homer in the eighth, good for Boston’s 22nd blown save of the season. “We are by no means out of this thing.”

“I think my stuff is really good,” added Cashner, who evidently sees Nolan Ryan’s image when he looks in the mirror. “I’m just not getting ahead of the hitters. I’ve been doing this a long time . . . There’s a lot of season left. I might have eight starts left.”

Let’s hope not. Cashner Sunday lasted 1⅔ innings. He walked five, hit one, and gave up three runs. He threw 51 pitches, 24 for strikes. He loaded the bases on 10 pitches while recording no outs in the top of the first. In the second, he started the inning by walking a guy hitting .206 and a guy hitting .147.

Cashner was acquired from the Orioles for a pair of 17-year-old non-prospects July 13. He is 56-86 lifetime and has never pitched on a winning team in the big leagues. He is on record saying he would retire before he would shave his beard.

I vote for keeping the “Duck Dynasty” look and retiring. Cashner has started six games since Dombrowski traded for him. He is 1-4 with an 8.01 ERA. He has allowed a whopping 61 baserunners and 27 earned runs in 30⅓ innings. There have been 41 hits, 17 walks, and three hit batsmen. He is also homerlicious — seven bombs in 30 ⅓ innings. This guy makes Johnny “Way Back” Wasdin look like Juan Marichal.

Cora wouldn’t entertain speculation about pulling Cashner from the rotation. Understood. The manager’s already got Rick Porcello (5.67) and ailing Price to worry about. But Cora said there would be discussions about the future of the rotation when the staff convenes Monday in Cleveland.

Cora also said he had no regrets about resting Betts against rookie Patrick Sandoval.

As for the dubious decisions by Devers and Vazquez, the manager went into Belichick overdrive, refusing to say that the players were acting on their own.

“We did a few things to try to make things happen,” Cora said with a smile. “As a group today, we did some things we don’t normally do.”

The Red Sox have played 120 games and have 42 left. They are a mere four games over .500. They are 7½ games out of the second wild-card spot. They have to overcome two teams from a group that includes Cleveland, Minnesota, Tampa Bay, and Oakland. They are way behind all of them.

Cora was full of confidence before Sunday’s loss. He talked about greeting newcomer Owings by telling him, “We’ve got a shot to go to the World Series and you’re going to be part of it. We’ve got a real shot. Not a fake shot.”

Five hours later, as the Sox packed for Cleveland, the manager sounded a little less confident.

Explaining the latest frustrating loss, Cora shrugged and said, “It’s something we’ve been doing the whole season. Inconsistent. That’s why it’s tough to make the playoffs.”

It is not happening, folks, no matter what NESN keeps telling you. The Red Sox need sweeps, not splits. Since the eight-game losing streak put them in the big wild-card hole, they are treading water. And they are running out of games.

## **\* *The Boston Herald***

### **Red Sox flop Andrew Cashner not helping Dave Dombrowski**

Tom Keegan

Better hurry if you plan to say hello to Andrew Cashner, the cherry on top of Dave Dombrowski’s quarter-billion dollar garbage plate, because soon it will be time to say goodbye.

The same could be true for the man who brought Cashner to the first, ahem, pennant race of his career.

The lone gift under Red Sox manager Alex Cora’s tree before the trading deadline, Cashner basically threw two types of pitches during his brief eternity on the mound Sunday afternoon at sun-splashed Fenway Park: belt-high strikes over the middle of the plate and balls not all that close to the strike zone.

Cashner is on record as saying he’s “not much of a numbers guy.” Good thing because the numbers he’s put up for the Red Sox since the Orioles unloaded him have been more crooked than a sociopath politician.

Sure, the sweaty blond mullet that crawls down his neck is a good look and all, but it doesn’t seem to have a Sampson effect.

Cashner, Dombrowski’s hired gun, has fired blanks since coming to the Red Sox for a pair of teenagers. Making the changeup a bigger part of his approach, Cashner did the best work of his shaky career with the Orioles this season. The league adjusted to his new approach, it seemed, just as the Red Sox decided to trade for him. Timing is everything in life.

The Fenway faithful serenaded Cashner with boos on his way off the mound and to the showers in the middle of a particularly messy second inning Sunday. Or was Cashner just the target of animus aimed higher in the organizational chain?

Cashner's first pitch, a straight 93 mph fastball, hit the bullseye. Angels leadoff hitter Brian Goodwin hammered it to right-center and it took a hard-hop over the fence for a ground-rule double.

By the time Cashner's worst outing since Aug. 2, 2018 at Texas (seven hits, 10 earned runs in 1⅔ innings) ended with two outs and the bases loaded in the second, Cashner had more than earned the boos.

He was not involved in the decision in a series finale won by the Angels, 5-4, in 10 innings.

The Angels torched him for three earned runs on three hits, five walks and a hit batsman. He threw more balls (27) than strikes (24) and had Josh Taylor to thank for keeping his ERA from blowing up even worse, and it's plenty unsightly as it is.

In six starts for the Red Sox, Cashner is 1-4 with an 8.02 ERA. He has served seven home runs in 30½ innings and has nearly as many walks (17) as strikeouts (21).

All those numbers, of course, go on Dombrowski's scorecard. Cashner counts as the fresh coat of paint that Dombrowski, architect of the 2018 World Series champions, slapped on the club that went 108-54 in the regular season and 11-3 in the postseason.

With stakes as high as \$240-million plus, the GM of the Red Sox floats in what-have-you-done-for-me lately air.

President of baseball operations Chris Antonetti speaks during a news conference, Wednesday, Oct. 10, 2018, in Cleveland. The Indians were so close in 2016, when they took the Chicago Cubs into extra innings in Game 7 of the World Series. Now they've lost six straight playoff games. (AP Photo/Tony Dejak) Dombrowski was in a tough spot in trying to improve a roster without triggering the highest luxury-tax plateau. He made it tougher by gambling on Nathan Eovaldi's history and signing him to a four-year, \$68-million contract, which left him no room to keep closer Craig Kimbrel. It backfired. Dombrowski also brought back World Series MVP Steve Pearce for \$6 million, another backfire. Dombrowski gambled again by signing then-ace Chris Sale (6-11, 4.44 ERA) to a five-year, \$145 million-extension that kicks in next season, the thinking being his market value would soar if the Sox waited until the end of the season. It doesn't look as if that will be the case, although the GM does deserve credit for signing All-Star shortstop Xander Bogaerts to a team-friendly extension.

Hired one week shy of four years ago, Dombrowski's contract extends through 2020. In coming to the Red Sox, Dombrowski reportedly received a small raise from his \$3 million salary with the Tigers.

Should ownership decide to trust its massive payroll to another decision-maker, eating one year of the GM's salary won't be a concern because it doesn't count against the luxury tax. Plus, it's a drop of wine in the ocean compared to how much money GMs are entrusted with spending.

With each Cashner trip to the mound and every day that gets crossed off the calendar that shows the Sox with little chance of grabbing the second wild card, Dombrowski's forced exit seems more likely.

What then?

If the Sox think they could pry Chris Antonetti from the Indians, that would be a nice place to start their clandestine search.

A former student manager for Georgetown basketball coach John Thompson during Allen Iverson's time there, Antonetti received a degree in sports administration from UMass after graduating from Georgetown. A native of Orange, Conn., near New Haven, Antonetti was a tennis standout in high school.

He has been with the Indians for nearly two decades, resisting the temptation to leave when offered jobs by multiple organizations. Promoted to president of baseball operations in 2015, Antonetti has mastered the

rare juggling act of winning cheaply. The Indians have roughly half the payroll of the Red Sox and entered the day nine games ahead of them in the race for the first wild card.

Dombrowski has earned a place of honor in club history as the man who built the 2018 Red Sox, maybe the greatest team the franchise ever has assembled. That speaks to the past, but doesn't mean he's the right man to steer the Red Sox into the future.

### **Rinse and repeat: Red Sox blow the save, lose again**

Jason Mastrodonato

The Red Sox starting pitcher was horrible and the bullpen was one reliever short.

Same as it was one day earlier.

Same as it's been all year.

The endless cycle of disappointment continued on Sunday, as this poorly put together Red Sox team took yet another blown save, its MLB-leading 22nd of the year, in a mind-numbing 5-4 loss to the Angels.

"Today I felt that we did a few things as a group we don't usually do," manager Alex Cora said.

After the Sox went tradeless on the day of the deadline, Cora said it would all be OK if the team won every series left on the schedule.

Since then, the Sox were swept by the Yankees, split a series with the Royals (it should've been a series win had Nathan Eovaldi not blown the save and rain caused the game to be suspended) and then split a series with an Angels team that's due to miss the playoffs for the sixth straight season.

The Sox are now 7½ games back of the second wild card spot with 42 games to play.

"We've been talking about it all year, we've been inconsistent," Cora said. "That way, it's tough to make it to the playoffs."

They've given fans little reason to be hopeful of a turnaround and now will hold their breath until Cora reveals his secret plan to save the starting rotation down the home stretch.

Andrew Cashner submitted yet another game-losing effort, his worst yet. He lasted just 51 pitches before Cora wisely pulled the plug on Cashner's start, and maybe his tenure with the Red Sox.

How can they let him take the mound again?

He threw just 24 strikes, was wild and ineffective and hasn't fooled anybody in six starts since he was acquired from the Orioles. He has an 8.02 ERA.

"It's been frustrating since the Yankees game but there is still a lot of season left," he said. "I think I might maybe have eight starts left. Just put this behind me and just keep looking forward, keep working with Dana, get back on track and give us a chance to where we want to go."

Cashner left with a 3-0 deficit and Josh Taylor saved him with a one-pitch out to end the inning with the bases loaded.

Cora's bullpen has about enough gas to be useful every other day. Saturday was not one of those days, as Hector Velazquez was summoned as a metaphorical surrender flag in the 12-4 loss.

Sunday looked like the bullpen's day for a little while, at least.

Taylor struck out five in 2½ strong innings. Marcus Waldnen and Eovaldi impressed, each throwing a scoreless inning to get it to the seventh. Eovaldi, who threw two innings on Friday and had Saturday off, was spotting 99-mph fastballs in a powerful inning, but Cora chose to replace him with Matt Barnes to face the heart of the order in the seventh.

Barnes hadn't pitched in five days and has thrown just three times this month.

He came up big in the seventh, notably striking out Mike Trout in a silly at-bat. But Barnes got away with a 98-mph strikeout down the middle that Trout swung right through.

The next inning, Barnes returned and made the same mistake to Kole Calhoun. This time, he paid for it as Calhoun hammered it into the Red Sox' bullpen for the game-tying run.

"Yesterday was a tough day, today was a tough day," Barnes said. "It's one of those things, when you win the first two games of the series, you've got to find a way to win the series itself. Definitely frustrating."

The game was yet another one of missed opportunities for a Red Sox team that loaded the bases twice and came up with only two runs in those spots.

Finally out of reliable arms after Brandon Workman pitched two innings, Cora turned to Ryan Weber, who predictably allowed the game-winning run to score on an RBI single in the 10th.

Rafael Devers was caught stealing third with one out in the first inning and Mookie Betts, used as a pinch runner for Mitch Moreland in the eighth, was caught stealing second with one out.

"I feel as a group we, I don't want to say we pressured, but we did some stuff that we shouldn't do and probably trying to make stuff happen today," Cora said.

The Sox fell to 62-58 with three games against the Indians beginning on Monday.

"We've got a good team," Barnes said. "We really do. Regardless of what records say and everything else says, everybody in this clubhouse is incredibly talented, and it's a close group of guys that's done something special together before. We are by no means out of this thing, and gotta go back and start tomorrow. "

### **PawSox callup Chris Owings has rough Red Sox debut**

Jason Mastrodonato

The Red Sox went with an unexpected choice as the leadoff hitter on Sunday afternoon.

Chris Owings, a seven-year big league veteran who had been released by the Royals in June after hitting .133 with two homers in 40 games, was called up from Triple-A Pawtucket and immediately inserted into the starting lineup, batting first and playing second base.

Mookie Betts was scheduled for a routine day off on Sunday, as the Sox completed their series against the Angels before flying to Cleveland for a crucial three-game set with the Tribe.

"I think offensively, after the All-Star break the bottom part of the lineup has been inconsistent," manager Alex Cora said. "So the mix and match is going to help us to do that. Today, he's playing obviously with Mookie's off-day. Just put him there. Swing the bat well. He's playing well. Every report I get from (Pawtucket) are positive. Veteran guy that might bring something different."

Owings had an awful game in the Sox' 5-4 loss in 10 innings. He went 0-for-5 with three strikeouts, including a strikeout with the bases loaded in the second inning. He swung through down-the-middle fastballs on several occasions.

"I mean it's one game," the manager said. "Just one game. That happens at the big league level."

While Owings struggled at the big league level this year, he's been on a tear for Pawtucket since signing a minor league contract with on June 17. He's hit .325 with 11 doubles, 11 homers and a .980 OPS in 44 games with the PawSox.

"Obviously, it was a rough first two months," said Owings, who turns 28 on Monday. "Basically, once I got that phone call and got let go by K.C., I really took some time and figured out what I needed to do differently. The past two years have been a little tough, so kind of went back to the drawing board."

From July 20 through July 25, Owings homered in six consecutive games.

"I got hot there that one week and caught some homers, but I think it's really just putting together some good at-bats," he said.

Owings was originally a first-round pick by the Diamondbacks in 2009 had some success over six years with the club, playing mostly shortstop and second base and some outfield.

He said he barely slept Saturday night and flew out of Detroit on the first flight Sunday morning, arriving in Boston around 7 a.m.

"It's nice to be on a contender, and just kind of be here and play hard and see what happens," he said.

When he arrived, Cora gave him a quick pep talk.

"We've got a shot to go to the World Series and you're a part of it," Cora said he told Owings. "You've been around the big leagues, you've seen it from afar, just come here, don't get caught up on what you see, what you hear, whatever – we've got a real shot. Let's go get 'em. Very simple."

Rough times for the rookie

Michael Chavis' struggles at second base opened the door for another right-handed hitter to come in and help out.

"Right now it's one of those he's chasing up and chasing down," Cora said. "We talk about controlling the strike zone and he's not controlling right now. He's been working hard with (hitting coaches Tim Hyers and Andy Barkett), trying to get to that pitch up in the zone, get on top of it. When he makes contact good things happen, even when he goes the other way. Right now, there's a lot of swings and misses."

Chavis is in an 0-for-12 stretch and was 0-for-2 Sunday after going 0-for-5 with three strikeouts on Saturday. His season stats are down to a .254 average and .766 OPS.

"It seems like body-language-wise that he's getting frustrated," Cora said. "He needs to keep battling. We talked about it earlier in the season, and we get caught up in the pitch up, he can't get to it. But if you're disciplined enough, some of them are balls. You control the zone you can control and do damage with it. Don't try to expand. And right now he's expanding up. Then he's looking for the pitch up, they spin the ball down and he's not been able to make good swing decisions."

Rotation plans coming soon

Is Rick Porcello's spot in the rotation in jeopardy?

Porcello's rough outing Saturday pushed his MLB-worst ERA to 5.67. Asked if Porcello will make his next start, Cora said, "We'll talk about it tomorrow and have a plan over the week. We have the off-day Thursday so we'll talk about it and come up with a plan."

Cora has previously discussed the idea of getting creative with the rotation, perhaps using starters in the bullpen or moving to an opener, though he hasn't shared his plans yet.

He was asked if it might be time to start resting Chris Sale to save bullets for next year.

"I'm not planning on doing that," Cora said. "That's something that if it comes up, we'll address it. But as of now, we know where we're at, we know what we have to do and we have a shot. And we have a real shot, it's not a fake one."

Josh Taylor shines

Josh Taylor had 2-1/3 scoreless innings out of relief, striking out five, and has lowered his ERA to 3.34.

"Probably had his best fastball and combination of pitches, fastball and slider," Cora said. "At that point we felt we were going to win the game. The way he threw the ball gave us a chance. They did an outstanding job throughout...It was a tough one. We're in a tough situation the last few days as far as relievers and length."

## **\* *MassLive.com***

### **Alex Cora admits Red Sox were pressing in Sunday loss: 'We did a few things we don't usually do'**

Chris Cutillo

Even amidst the a season of inconsistency, Red Sox manager Alex Cora has been proud of how his team has battled. The second-year manager has consistently said the Sox have approached each game the same no matter where they sat in the standings.

Sunday's 5-4 loss to the Angels was different. Cora said after the game that his group played differently than they had in the first 119 games of the season.

"We made some decisions today we don't usually make," Cora said. "I do feel that as a group, we did some stuff maybe we shouldn't do. Trying to make some stuff happen and just made mistakes."

Cora refused to get into specifics, but a few plays from Sunday's game stand out. Rafael Devers, who hit a one-out double in the first, was thrown out by a mile trying to steal third. Christian Vazquez popped out to first base on a surprise bunt attempt with a runner on first in the eighth. Mookie Betts was caught stealing during Vazquez's at-bat after coming in to pinch run for Mitch Moreland, running into a huge out in a tie game.

Cora thought his team, which fell to 7 1/2 games out in the wild-card race with its second consecutive loss, got away from its game in an attempt to get a much-needed series win.

"We have talent and all that, we just have to put it on the field," he said. "Like I said, today felt like we did a few things trying to make it happen. Sometimes, when you do that, it doesn't happen. Most of the time.

"You've got to let the game come to you" he added. "It's something we've done an outstanding job, regardless of the situations we're in. We've been staying with the process and doing the things we usually do. But today actually felt that way."

### **Andrew Cashner's leash with Boston Red Sox may be running short**

Chris Cotillo

When the Red Sox acquired Andrew Cashner from the Orioles shortly after the All-Star break, it looked like a shrewd, low-cost move for a team trying to add length to its starting rotation. Six starts later, the trade is looking like a disaster.

Cashner walked as many Angels hitters (five) as he retired Sunday afternoon and was pulled in the second inning after digging the Sox an early 3-0 hole. His shortest start since last August put his ERA at 8.01 in 30 1/3 innings since joining the Red Sox.

Cashner, who pitched very well for the Orioles over his first 17 starts of the season, was supposed to give the Sox a better option than the likes of Hector Velazquez, Josh Smith and Ryan Weber in the fifth rotation spot. So far, he has given the Sox more innings but worse results, losing five of his first six outings.

“I never give any excuse for not being good,” Cashner said. “I’m not executing. Cutting my fastball right now. Had a good fastball this week in my bullpen and it just didn’t translate today. I think my stuff is really good. I’m just not getting ahead and not making pitches when I need to.”

Asked about Cashner’s rotation spot moving forward, Sox manager Alex Cora would only say the coaching staff would meet Monday to determine how to creatively line up the rotation for a 19-day stretch that includes six off days for the rotation.

“As a group, we’ll talk about the group and the off days and everything,” Cora said.

The Sox are considering a few different strategies in the next couple weeks, including skipping and piggybacking starters. While it appears Eduardo Rodriguez and Chris Sale are safe in the rotation, the others-- namely Cashner and Rick Porcello-- are not.

Unlike Porcello, a former Cy Young winner and World Series champion, the Red Sox don’t owe Cashner anything. The cost of acquiring him was light-- two 17-year-old prospects and about \$1.6 million in salary-- so cutting bait this soon isn’t out of the question.

The Sox are 9-9 in games started by spot starters (Velazquez, Smith, Weber, Darwinzon Hernandez and Brian Johnson) this season compared to 1-5 in Cashner’s starts. For a team that is now 7 1/2 games out of a wild-card spot, results are all that matter and Cashner simply isn’t delivering them.

Cashner’s roster spot is probably safe for now, as the Red Sox are short a starter after placing David Price on the injured list with a left wrist cyst earlier in the week. If Price was healthy, the Sox might be comfortable rolling out a rotation of Sale, Rodriguez, Price, Porcello and Johnson while removing Cashner from the rotation.

If Cashner is not pitching well when Price returns, the marriage between the Red Sox and their new right-hander could end quickly. A move to the bullpen might be out of the question for a pitcher who has made one relief appearance since 2013 and is notoriously picky about the situations in which he wants to pitch.

Dave Dombrowski has shown a penchant for holding onto trade additions for too long (see Tyler Thornburg), but the leash on Cashner may be getting short. How the Red Sox reorganize their rotation for the next couple weeks will be telling in regards to how they view Cashner moving forward.

**Red Sox’s Alex Cora explains why Mookie Betts pinch-ran instead of pinch-hitting in 8th inning**

Chris Cotillo

With Sunday's game tied, 4-4, in the eighth inning, it was just a matter of time before outfielder Mookie Betts came off the bench to make an impact. But when Betts did enter the game, it was in a role not many would have expected.

Betts, who had a scheduled day off against the Angels, entered as a pinch-runner instead of hitting in the eighth. After Mitch Moreland walked to lead off the inning, Betts replaced him at first base as manager Alex Cora let Christian Vazquez hit and pinch-hit Brock Holt for Michael Chavis.

Betts could have been used for Chavis with one out or Cora could have waited until leadoff man Chris Owings came up after Jackie Bradley Jr. Instead, the manager saw a chance to score with the leadoff man aboard and sent Betts out for Moreland at first base.

"The guys that were coming behind, Christian and Brock, it was a good spot right there," Cora explained. "Mitch got on base and we didn't make contact on a 3-1 count. That's why I went with him there."

The 3-1 count Cora referenced was during Holt's at-bat, when Betts took off for second base and was thrown out by catcher Anthony Bemboom. Holt failed to make contact on what appeared to be a hit-and-run with one out and Betts was cut down for the second out of the inning.

Holt then walked before Bradley Jr. ended the inning by flying out to left. Betts came to bat in the 10th but popped out to the shortstop after Bemboom had hit what turned out to be the game-winning single in the top of the 10th.

### **Andrew Cashner pulled in second inning, Boston Red Sox bullpen blows lead in 5-4 loss to Angels**

Chris Cotillo

Andrew Cashner was acquired to go deep into ballgames for the Red Sox. His failure to do so Sunday caught up to a taxed bullpen late in a 5-4, extra-innings loss to the Angels on Sunday afternoon.

Cashner lasted just 1  $\frac{2}{3}$  innings, allowing three runs and walking five before getting the early hook from manager Alex Cora. The Sox' bullpen kept Los Angeles in check for the next five innings before Kole Calhoun hit a game-tying homer in the eighth inning off Matt Barnes and Anthony Bemboom hit a game-winning single off Ryan Weber in the 10th.

Los Angeles took an early 3-0 lead for the third straight day, taking advantage of a wild Cashner in the first two innings. Brian Goodwin scored on an Albert Pujols double play in the first and Shohei Ohtani added a two-run single in the second as nine of the 13 batters Cashner faced reach base.

Reliever Josh Taylor came in to relieve Cashner and dominated, striking out five Angels in 2  $\frac{1}{3}$  perfect innings. Boston's offense plated its first run when Angels starter Patrick Sandoval walked Rafael Devers with the bases loaded in the second and tied things up on a deep Christian Vazquez two-run homer in the fourth.

On a day in which the two starters combined to walk nine batters in 6  $\frac{1}{3}$  innings, the Sox scored the go-ahead run in fitting fashion. With Mitch Moreland batting in the fifth, Sandoval issued a passed ball that scored Devers and gave Boston a 4-3 lead.

Boston's bullpen continued to roll until the eighth, when Calhoun hit a game-tying homer to right field. After Brandon Workman got four outs and Boston failed to score in the ninth, manager Alex Cora turned to Weber-- his last available reliever-- and took the loss when Bemboom hit a two-out single to right.

With the loss, the Sox failed to clinch a series win over the Angels and split a four-game set. The Red Sox, who went 3-3 on their homestand, will fly to Cleveland on Sunday night ahead of a three-game series with the Indians that begins Monday.

Owings struggles in Sox' debut

Infielder Chris Owings, who was called up Sunday, went 0-for-5 with three strikeouts in the leadoff spot for Boston.

Indians up next

The Red Sox will hit the road for three games before returning to Fenway Park on Friday. Here are the pitching probables for their series with the Indians:

Monday, 7:05 p.m. - LHP Eduardo Rodriguez vs. RHP Zach Plesac

Tuesday, 7:05 p.m. - LHP Chris Sale vs. RHP Mike Clevinger

Wednesday, 1:05 p.m. - TBA vs. RHP Shane Bieber

**Chris Owings, new Boston Red Sox infielder, leading off hours after taking 5:45 a.m. flight to Boston**

Chris Cotillo

Chris Owings' journey to Fenway Park for his Red Sox debut will be one he'll always remember-- as long as he doesn't start hallucinating from sleep deprivation.

Owings was called up to join the Red Sox on Sunday. He received the news after playing two innings for Pawtucket in Toledo on Saturday night and scrambled to get to Boston before a 1:05 p.m. start against the Angels.

Owings had a batboy drive him an hour from Toledo to Detroit, where he arrived around midnight Sunday morning. He woke up at 3:15 to catch a 5:45 flight to Boston and arrived around 7:15.

From there, Owings went directly to Fenway Park and had breakfast before meeting his coaches and new teammates. He was inserted into the lineup as the leadoff man and second baseman for the series finale against the Angels.

Two weeks after Owings was released by the Royals in June, the Red Sox signed him to a minor-league deal so he could provide some infield depth at Triple-A. All he has done since then is rake, hitting .325 with a .980 OPS and 11 homers in 44 games.

"Just putting together some good at-bats," Owings said. "The way I'm swinging the bat right now and the way I'm feeling, I just want to keep that going."

Manager Alex Cora said Owings brings speed and versatility, as the 28-year-old has played eight positions in seven big-league seasons with Arizona and Kansas City.

"He can play the outfield, he can play the infield," Cora said. "Right-handed hitter, he can run a little bit. We have options. I think offensively, after the All-Star break, the bottom part of the lineup has been inconsistent. The mix and match is going to help us out."

Owings joins Brock Holt and Michael Chavis as second-base options for the Sox and can provide a right-handed bat or pinch-running option off the bench. He hit righties (1.157 OPS) much better than he did lefties (.604 OPS) much better in Pawtucket and will likely be used in a fashion similar to how Boston uses Holt.

"We'll mix and match," Cora said. "We're going to go to Cleveland where they mix and match their bullpen with the lefties and righties. It's not that we're just going to pinch-hit to pinch-hit, but it gives you options."

Owings has never appeared in a postseason game and now has an outside chance of playing October baseball for the first time in his career. Despite Boston being 5 1/2 games out of a wild-card spot entering Sunday, Cora's message was one

"We've got a shot to go to the World Series, and you're part of it," the manager told Owings. "You've been around the big leagues and you've seen it from afar. Just come here, don't get caught up on what you see or what you hear. We've got a real shot."

Owings is happy to be back in the big leagues after his longest stretch in Triple-A since 2013. He'll be even happier to catch up on rest on the team's flight to Cleveland after Sunday's game.

"It'll be nice to get some sleep tonight," he said.

### **Boston Red Sox will reset rotation this week; Rick Porcello might not make Friday start**

Chris Cotillo

After Chris Sale pitches Tuesday in Cleveland, all bets are off when it comes to the Red Sox rotation.

Righty Andrew Cashner will start the series finale against the Angels on Sunday and Eduardo Rodriguez will pitch Monday against the Indians. What happens after Sale's start will be determined when team decision-makers get together Monday morning to plan things out.

"We're going to talk about it tomorrow," manager Alex Cora said. "We're going to have the plan over the week. We have the off day on Thursday so we'll talk tomorrow during the day and come up with the plan."

Cora said the team hasn't decided on a starter for Wednesday, which would be Brian Johnson's turn. Even more notably, Cora wouldn't commit to Rick Porcello taking his turn Friday night when the team begins a three-game home series against the Orioles.

The Red Sox' rotation will have six off days in 19 days beginning Thursday, with five full off days and a day of rest Aug. 22, when Boston will finish its suspended game against the Royals in the 10th inning. Cora said the team might skip starters or piggyback them to give guys additional rest.

"That's going to benefit us," Cora said. "We're going to reset as far as the innings and all that and put us in a good spot. They're going to benefit from the off days and it's going to put us in a good spot for September."

After the series finale in Cleveland, the Sox will play five home games (and the end of the suspended game) in eight days. The expectation is that Cora won't keep his rotation in line during that stretch.

"I do feel we'll take advantage of the schedule," Cora said. "The schedule has been pretty tough on us for a while. Now it's going to help us."

## **\* *RedSox.com***

### **Sox pitching a mixed bag in extra-innings loss**

Jessica Camerato

By the time the Red Sox wrapped up the series finale against the Angels in 10 innings, Andrew Cashner's abbreviated start was hours in the past.

Sunday's game, which ended in a Red Sox 5-4 loss at Fenway Park, was a contrast of on-point pitching and struggles on the mound.

Cashner was chased in the second inning with the bases loaded after giving up three runs. He issued five walks (tying a season-high), allowed three hits and struck out one over 51 pitches in 1 2/3 innings. He described the start as "tough," and said he didn't have command of his fastball. Cashner, who last earned a win on July 26 against the Yankees, is 1-4 since being traded from the Orioles last month.

"I never give any excuse for not being good," Cashner said. "I just am not executing. ... I had a good bullpen this past week, and it didn't translate today. I think my stuff's really good. I'm just not getting ahead and not making pitches when I need to."

That could have been the end of the story for the Red Sox on Sunday. Instead, the early combination of relievers Josh Taylor and Marcus Walden clamped down on the Angels' order and gave the Red Sox a chance to get back in the game.

Taylor inherited the two-out, bases loaded jam from Cashner, but responded by getting Kole Calhoun to ground out to end the inning. From there, the left-hander retired the next six batters, including a career-best five strikeouts (one against Mike Trout) over a career-high 2 1/3 scoreless frames. Taylor, who pitched a clean ninth inning on Friday, recorded his fourth consecutive scoreless appearance.

"J.T. probably had his best fastball today and the best combination of pitches, fastball-slider," Red Sox manager Alex Cora said. "At [that] point, we felt we were going to win the game. The way he threw the ball gave us a chance."

The Red Sox turned to the reliable Walden for the fourth. The righty entered the game without having allowed a hit to the last 26 batters he faced and extended the streak to 30. Since the All-Star break, he has held opponents to an .048 batting average.

As Taylor and Walden did damage control, the Red Sox put in work at the plate. They scored their first run in the second when Angels starting pitcher Patrick Sandoval issued three walks in the frame, including one to Jackie Bradley Jr. that forced home Andrew Benintendi.

Christian Vazquez tied things up with a two-run homer in the fourth inning. By then, the Red Sox were looking at a whole different ball game than when Cashner exited. In the bottom of the fifth, Boston took the lead when Rafael Devers came home on a bases-loaded passed ball.

Nathan Eovaldi gave the Red Sox one scoreless inning in the sixth, after he had allowed a run in his last three relief appearances. The stage was set for Matt Barnes, who maintained the one-run lead in the seventh. But Barnes allowed the tying run when Calhoun sent a shot over the Green Monster and out of the park to lead off the eighth. After throwing a scoreless July, he has surrendered six runs in his last three outings.

"It was a 2-1 fastball that was down the middle of the plate," Barnes said. "I was trying to go up and in on him."

Brandon Workman came in with one out in the eighth to get out of the inning and did so, completing 1 1/3 frames without allowing a run. He threw his seventh consecutive scoreless outing to give the Red Sox an opportunity in extra innings.

Ryan Weber, one of three arms available in the bullpen when extras began, allowed the game-winning single to Angels catcher Anthony Bemboom.

Cora said the Red Sox will address the pitching rotation on Monday when the team is in Cleveland for a three-game series against the Indians. The Red Sox have limited options with starter David Price on the 10-day injured list because of a cyst on his left wrist. Following Sunday's loss and series split with the Angels,

the Red Sox are 7 1/2 games behind the Indians and Twins, who are deadlocked for first place in both the American League Wild Card and AL Central standings.

“We’ve been inconsistent,” Cora said. “It’s tough to make the playoffs [when you’re inconsistent].”

### **Owings called up, leads off on Mookie's day off**

Jessica Camerato

Some players find out they are called up to the Majors, well, by a phone call. That wasn’t quite the situation for Chris Owings.

“I was running out to left field and everybody was kind of yelling at me,” Owings said. “I had actually thought somebody had got thrown out of the game, so they wanted me to change positions. I come back in the dugout and everybody was kind of giving me high fives.”

Owings was mid-game for Triple-A Pawtucket in Toledo, Ohio, when the news came in from the Red Sox on Saturday. From there, Owings was driven to Detroit for his flight Sunday morning. He arrived around midnight, woke up at 3:50 a.m., took a 5:45 plane to Boston and landed at 7:15. Owings went directly to Fenway Park for the 1:05 p.m. game against the Angels, where manager Alex Cora told him he not only was starting at second base against the Angels -- he was batting leadoff since Mookie Betts had the day off.

“It’ll be nice to get some sleep tonight in Cleveland, for sure,” Owings said, as the Red Sox play the Indians on Monday.

The callup is the latest “up” in Owings’ up-and-down season. He signed a one-year, \$3 million deal (plus \$500,000 in performance bonuses) with the Royals in December. But he hit just .133 over 40 games for Kansas City, and was designated for assignment on May 31. Owings was released on June 4.

The Red Sox signed Owings to a Minor League deal two weeks later and assigned him to Pawtucket. He then went on a six-game home run tear from July 20-26, breaking free from his early-season struggles.

“Obviously, it was a rough first two months,” Owings said. “Once I got that phone call and I got let go from KC, I just really took some time and figured out what I needed to do differently. The past two years have been a little tough, so kind of went back to the drawing board. I think some of the results have paid off, the way I’ve been swinging the bat recently. Just kind of maybe understanding my swing a little bit better and getting in a consistent groove.”

Owings was hitting .325/.385/.595 with a .980 OPS in 44 games in Triple-A before being promoted to the Red Sox, tallying 34 RBIs, 26 runs, 11 home runs and 11 doubles. Even though he was batting leadoff on Sunday, Cora envisions him adding a boost to the bottom half of the lineup and providing roster versatility.

“He can play the outfield, he can play the infield,” Cora said. “Right-handed hitter, he can run a little bit. So we have options.”

Sunday’s finale wasn’t the first go-around at Fenway Park for Owings, who turns 28 years old on Monday. He was a first-round pick by the Diamondbacks in 2009, and made his Major League debut in September of 2013. Owings had played three games in Boston, with four hits in 10 at-bats.

### **Additional roster moves**

The Red Sox optioned right-hander Hector Velázquez to Triple-A after Saturday's game to clear room on the 25-man roster. Velazquez was called up Thursday when David Price (wrist) went on the 10-day injured list. He allowed two runs over two innings of relief in two games against the Angels in this series.

The team also transferred Steve Pearce to the 60-day IL to make space on the 40-man roster. Pearce is rehabbing from a partially torn PCL in his left knee. He was with the Red Sox on Saturday, but there is no timetable for his return. He is not yet cleared to run.

## \* **WEET.com**

### **How in the world did the Red Sox land in this abyss?**

Rob Bradford

This one felt different. This one felt more like the end than any of the others.

The Red Sox are eight games out (in the loss column) of a Wild Card berth with 42 games to play. They are just four games over .500. Yes, this loss -- a 5-4, 10-inning defeat at the hands of the Angels -- seemed to send the last bit of optimism down the drain.

Before the game, there was hope regarding the Red Sox' postseason chances. At least that was their manager's message.

"We have a shot," said Alex Cora at approximately 11:05 a.m. "We have a real shot. It's not a fake one. We'll take care of today, win this series, we'll go to Cleveland. Do that, and like I said, we're going to be creative towards the end of the month now with the off-day."

Then, six hours or so later, a familiar refrain was resurfaced.

"It's something we've been doing the whole season," the manager responded when asked about key miscues. "We've been talking about it. Been inconsistent. That way, it's tough to make it to the playoffs."

We've gone through this before, where a page is turned only to flip back right into the previous chapter. But even the tone of Cora in the postgame presser suggested this wasn't just one 162. The Yankees. The Rays. Their importance was obvious. This one was the Angels. But believe or not it felt like more of punctuation than any of the others.

Maybe it was because so much what ailed the Red Sox in this most winnable of games represented the impetus for how they landed at this point.

Andrew Cashner: The guy Dave Dombrowski was quick to reference when talking about July roster-tweaking and trade activity/inactivity was a disaster. He got five outs, walked five batters, gave up three hits and allowed three runs while digging the Red Sox a hole on a day they needed anything but.

This has been a disaster. Cashner has made six starts for the Red Sox with opponents hitting .339 with a 1.019 OPS. In 30 1/3 innings, he has allowed 61 baserunners. That is 61. The easy comparison would be to the trade deadline acquisition of Erik Bedard, who pitched extremely well leading up to the Red Sox trade in 2011 only to give his new team eight starts of mediocre pitching. That wouldn't be fair to the Bedard family.

There wasn't much to glean out of the postgame comments emanating from either Cora or Cashner after the game. Cora was very matter-of-fact in his assessment, citing the righty's complete lack of command. Cashner offered the tone that some bristle at around these parts, simply saying he needs to get better and is already looking toward his next start.

"It's been frustrating since the Yankees game," said Cashner, who owns a 8.01 ERA in his six starts with the Red Sox. "But there is still a lot of season left. I think I might maybe have eight starts left. Just put this behind me and just keep looking forward, keep working with Dana (LeVangie), get back on track and give us a chance to where we want to go."

This was a very Bedard-esque response. It all seemed way too familiar.

The bullpen: Matt Barnes is going to be put in the crosshairs for this one, giving up the game-tying homer to Kole Calhoun leading off the eighth inning. But much like the day before, the true takeaway is how the Red Sox seem at least one arm short. Just like Saturday, the most important damage when Cora was forced to extend a reliever a second inning. First, it was Darwinzon Hernandez, and this time it was Barnes. By the time Ryan Weber was called upon to pitch a second straight day (ultimately surrendering the game-winning run) expectations were out the window. Bad start. A reliever short. Sound familiar?

Decisions, decisions, decisions: It's unfair to pin the hopes and dreams on a guy who was just called up a few hours before his Red Sox debut, but Chris Owings' presence represented how the Sox' world isn't spinning the same way as a year ago. On paper it made little sense to start Owings, nevermind hit him leadoff.

But in 2018 seemingly unorthodox moves often were Cora's bread and butter. This one, unfortunately for the Red Sox, followed the predicted script with Owings going 0-for-5 with three strikeouts.

There were other moments that reminded us the magic was on hiatus.

After Mitch Moreland led off the eighth with a walk, Cora chose to use Mookie Betts -- who had started the day on the bench -- as a pinch-runner instead of that of a pinch-hitter. That was followed by a pop-up bunt attempt from Christian Vazquez, who already had launched an absolute missile over the left-field wall. Then came Betts easily being thrown out trying to steal. It was one thing after another, and none of it was working.

Details, details, details: Remember when Cora ranted about the Red Sox not paying attention to details back in the second series of the season? Well ...

Take, for example, Rafael Devers attempting to steal third after his one-out double in the first inning. Rally killed. The Vazquez ill-advised bunt. The Betts' failed stolen base attempt. Or how about Barnes' ill-fated pitch to Calhoun that split the middle of the plate? While the offering was obviously misplaced, a replay showed his catcher setting up right down the middle instead of the high-and-inside area the pitcher later said he was trying to get to. That wouldn't have seemed to be part of the plan.

Same old story. Just a little off. Price paid.

Now the new narrative will have to start in Cleveland against the hottest team in the American League. The Red Sox are saying all the right things, and are clearly flummoxed by how their efforts are going unrewarded. It seems like a longshot, however, that Cora's club is going to reach the end of this month feeling any different than its current lot in life.

This is where they've landed and this, apparently, is who they are.

### **Andrew Cashner exits after getting just 5 outs**

Rob Bradford

The Andrew Cashner experiment only keeps getting worse.

Making his sixth start for the Red Sox the righty managed to get just five outs before being lifted in the second inning against the Angels. Before exiting Cashner gave up three runs on three hits and five walks. He was replaced by Josh Taylor, who managed to strand the two runners left on by the Sox starter.

Cashner would manage to throw strikes on just 24 of his 51 pitches.

"No command," said Red Sox manager Alex Cora regarding Cashner. "You saw the walks. He gets the double play in the first inning. We thought OK, get your rhythm. That wasn't the case. He went to the slider a lot today but it wasn't there. He didn't command the strike zone so we ran into trouble.

Since being traded to the Red Sox Cashner's ERA stands at 8.01.

The day got off on the wrong foot for the righty with a first-pitch double off the bat of Brian Goodwin, who was followed with a walk to Mike Trout. After loading the bases via Shohei Ohtani's single, Cashner limited the damage via a 5-4-3 double play grounder by Albert Pujols.

But while Cashner was able to escape the first with just one run, he got into trouble again in the second thanks to three walks and a two-run single from Ohtani. Another walk, this one to Pujols, ended the day for the starter.

It marked the second-shortest start of his career, having lasted just six pitches in 2016 against Colorado. The only other comparable outing came last season when he was pulled after 1 2/3 innings following 10 runs on seven hits from Texas.

## **\* *The Athletic***

### **'You set me up, I couldn't win': An oral history of the 1994 MLB strike from both sides of the bargaining table**

Evan Drellich

Twenty-five years later, it's easy to wonder where we're heading.

"The idea of anybody associated with the MLBPA or a player talking about a strike in 2021 — given that we haven't even started negotiations and we have two years left to go on a contract — I find it to be mind-boggling," commissioner Rob Manfred said.

"You don't look forward to a work stoppage," union head Tony Clark said. "The endgame is not a work stoppage. The endgame is to find a fair deal at the bargaining table. A work stoppage happens when there is no other recourse."

When the game's last work stoppage began on Aug. 12, 1994, baseball owners had long been plagued by infighting. Big markets and small markets were tearing each other apart.

Even worse, perhaps, for the owners had been their poorly defined front. Bud Selig, the acting commissioner since 1992, was in power and gaining more, aided by Jerry Reinsdorf of the White Sox and others — leaving the league's lead negotiator, Richard Ravitch, to flounder.

Ownership was seeking monumental changes: a salary cap, as well as revenue sharing.

The players, meanwhile, were represented by a union that had been through seven work stoppages previously, with abundant institutional recall and, most of all, fortitude. Founder Marvin Miller was retired, but still a resource. Don Fehr, Gene Orza, Lauren Rich and Michael Weiner were amongst a group of lawyers who had won time and again.

After a 232-day strike, and more than a year of additional negotiation once it ended, a luxury tax — but not a salary cap — arrived. So too did revenue sharing, as well as labor lessons that have resonated ever since.

Rob Manfred, then outside counsel to Major League Baseball at the firm Morgan, Lewis & Bockius: I was responsible for working on the revenue sharing plan, most of the big economic pieces in the deal. One of

the senior partners from the firm was still involved, Chuck O'Connor. But day-to-day, I was the person that dealt with baseball as a client.

I was at 350 Park, which is where baseball's offices were. At that time, I still lived in Washington and I had been here for most of the summer, every day. And was here the night the strike started.

Stan Kasten, president of the Atlanta Braves: Right before the bitter end and the strike began, I was locked in a room, me and (Red Sox CEO) John Harrington on a Saturday morning with Orel Hershiser and Lauren Rich. And this was a last-gasp (effort) to put anything off. We kicked some things around.

Orel has since told me, "Look, here's what we were told: 'If we just hang on and do nothing, the owners are going to cave. Because they always cave.'" And I do believe that was the truth. The belief.

Many teams lost less money when they weren't playing games. Now, when those lines cross — where you're losing less money during a strike — that is a powerful motivator to take a strike and fix the problem.

I knew how bad things were for the industry. But no one cared on the other side. "Not my problem," that was the attitude.

Don Fehr, MLBPA executive director: The owners don't like free agency because they lose control over players and it costs them more money because they have to pay something into the player's market value. So they tried to prevent it forever. In '76, they locked the players out in an effort to blunt it. In '81 there was a long strike in an effort to blunt it. Then there was collusion, then there was the 1990 lockout, and then there was 1994-95. It was all an effort to curtail free agency so the owners could keep more of the money. That's it. There's nothing else there.

Tom Glavine, pitcher for the Atlanta Braves, player representative for the National League: Honestly, the preparation for '94 was going on for a while. To Don and Gene's credit and the rest of the staff, they'd been through it. They knew the writing was on the wall. Probably '93 spring training, we started having meetings. There was at least a two-year preparation, financially, leading up to it.

And then you just go into the '94 season knowing that it's kind of out there, a dark cloud that's hanging over everything. You hope that you're gonna get something done, but inevitably, nothing ever does get done. That's why you set a strike date and some sort of artificial deadline.

That line in the sand was a salary cap, and we were fighting for a salary cap vs. no salary cap. That was an easy fight, so to speak.

Gene Orza, MLBPA assistant general counsel: The origin of the '94 strike really is the conclusion of the 1990 negotiation, when the clubs were very dissatisfied with the 1990 deal, and blamed Fay Vincent for it. You'll recall that Vincent had just become commissioner. He didn't want to have his first season be under the shadow of a work stoppage lasting beyond the lockout period that had begun. So he basically negotiated on his own (a deal that) generated a lot of ill will among a lot of the owners. And I believe that was the beginning of the end of Vincent's term.

We were telling the players all along, be prepared for a major fight. Because we knew they were gunning for that fight. They thought they could force the salary cap down the players' throat, particularly against the backdrop of there already being one in basketball and football.

Manfred: I think the groundwork for '94 took place, it was really a product of the 20 years after the (Andy) Messersmith decision. Obviously, the perpetual reserve system was very pro-club. After the Messersmith decision, the economic arrangements between the clubs and the players moved continually in the players' direction. Until it was so out of whack that you had people prepared to take a long dispute in an effort to get the economics more balanced.

Dave Winfield, 12-time All-Star entering his fifth work stoppage: I can't tell you going into it that it was any different. You're battling head to head on the field, but when it comes to issues involving your employment and future, the players were just bound together. There's always someone that may go off the rails, or say something that doesn't reflect the greater number of players, and I think that happened in just about each work stoppage. But as soon as they got informed of what's really at stake and what's the purpose of it, they seemed to come on board.

Tony Clark, invitee to big league camp: I was still a prospect in the Tigers organization, but I went to major-league camp in the spring of '94 before splitting the regular season between Double-A Trenton and Triple-A Toledo. I remember having conversations in the clubhouse that this was actually going to happen, and I remember reading everything I could.

Despite the fact that we were in the minor leagues and could continue to play, there was a question as to whether or not we should, in order to represent the entire group in the fashion that we thought was important.

Randy Levine, lead negotiator for MLB starting in 1995: Let's talk about revenue sharing, because it was the issue at that time. Everybody thinks the salary restraint was. It wasn't. There had been meeting after meeting, one in Fort Lauderdale, one in Kohler (in 1993). You ask anybody around at that time, Kohler was the worst meeting in the history of Major League Baseball. After Kohler, to come up with any plan that worked, the people who devised it would deserve a Nobel Peace Prize.

When I arrived, I asked about the tie between revenue sharing and the cap, and was told the two together was the only way the owners could agree.

Did the owners need relief overall, on player compensation? Yes. But only to achieve revenue sharing. The two were together. The problem with the owners' argument is very, very simple at that time: Nobody's forcing you to spend money. Or spend money you don't have.

Glavine: You come home, and your feeling is, OK, this is going to go on for a few days, or a few weeks, we're going to get something done. You stay in ready mode. You keep working out, you keep trying to throw. So that if and when the season starts up again, you're ready to go.

Fehr: The short answer is you prepare for the worst and you hope for the best. So did I know in mid-summer that we'd have something that'd go on the length of time that it did? No. Did it astonish me that sooner or later there was going to be another fight that looked a lot like 1981? Also no.

On Sept. 14, 1994, the World Series and postseason were canceled, the only time a World Series has not been played since 1904.

Lauren Rich, MLBPA assistant general counsel: Why did we decide on Aug. 12? The whole point of picking a strike date is to pick a date that gives you enough time before the end of the season so that you won't lose the World Series. To give you enough, but to hit them at a time where they're making the most money in local television and at the gate.

There was a venomous feel to what was going on. And if they are never going to get a deal, then do you strike the last day of the season? Why even bother to have the players lose pay?

I think Don and Gene were really, really concerned that the owners were never going to make a deal, and that they were always going to pull down the World Series. That's the big mystery, and that's the big question. And I think only Bud and Jerry Reinsdorf know the answer to that. Maybe Kasten knows.

Kasten: No one wanted the World Series canceled. To cancel the World Series was unthinkable.

They like to ignore that — what do you mean, “we” cancel it? You guys are on strike! What do you mean, “we’re” canceling it? Are you showing up to play? You guys are striking! On our side, it was unimaginable in the literal sense of the word.

David Cone, pitcher for the Kansas City Royals, player representative for the American League: That was our best leverage, there’s no two ways about it. We thought that would get them to the bargaining table and come up with some sort of agreement. There was no meaningful bargaining negotiation prior to the cancellation of the World Series, which led us to believe that was what they wanted all along.

Fehr: Nobody wanted to strike. We delayed setting a strike date, we delayed doing the rest of it. But if we indeed had played the season out and there was no agreement, the owners could have unilaterally changed the terms of the contract after the impasse. And I don’t think anybody would have cared if the players went on strike in the middle of November. And so a strike, or a lockout for that matter, only has use if people are working.

Manfred: We did feel tremendous pressure to try to get back to the table and get something done. We worked really hard up until the point in time that it just became clear there was no way we were going to be able — you get to a point in September where you’re not going to get the players back in time to get them in shape, to resume the season in any meaningful way. That, of course, leads to the cancellation of the World Series.

We started right back at it trying to get something done to be ready to play the next year.

Randy Hendricks, longtime agent: I remember how much I had a feeling the owners were going to prove they’re not going to fold this time. I remember crying when the World Series was canceled. And I realize that makes me sound like a sentimentalist. I don’t mean crying like a baby, but tears in my eyes.

Cone: The first meeting we had after the strike, (Rockies owner Jerry McMorris) stood up and talked up about that he was a free enterpriser, and he believed in beating your competitors in the brains. And that he wasn’t in line with what Jerry Reinsdorf and Bud Selig wanted at that point. He was a bit of an outlier, and a bit of an outspoken guy. Over the course of the winter, they kind of got him in line.

To me, that was the ironic part about the whole situation: You had a lot of owners who were very much free enterprisers in their own personal business. But when they got into owning baseball teams, they wanted something different. They wanted a welfare system, restrictions, regulations.

Fehr: The subsidiary issue was, XYZ small franchise — by the way, the phrase is small-income, not small-market — XYZ small franchise needs help. They can’t keep up. The initial reaction is, who picked them? Who put a team there, who determined what the capital structure is? And all the rest of that. The argument was, what the owners would like is a system so that the most poorly located, most highly undercapitalized and worst managed team could still make a nice profit.

What all of these restrictions do is to in effect say, we’re going to insulate from your management. That’s sort of the purpose of it. Our standpoint is to look at it. And if we can figure out a way to address those concerns consistently, the players’ goal is, you try and do that.

Kasten: Don’t rile me up reminding me of those old things. Come on, alright? What should we do, Don? Just have teams in the 12 best markets with the 12 best management teams? You’d still have a top team and a bottom team. You would just have 18 fewer teams. Come on, arguments like that don’t get us anywhere. But those are the kind of arguments you’d have to hear.

I think we did understand that what was really important on the players’ side was the historical imperatives. The legacy of Curt Flood and Marvin Miller, etc. And that really overrode pure self-interest, pure economic tradeoffs that might have been contemplated otherwise.

The union even back then would invoke at every turn: Curt Flood, Marvin Miller. They would bring Marvin out to meetings when passions would flag. That was a real factor.

Cone: Curt Flood, before he passed away, came to talk to the players in New York one day, and it was very powerful. And his line that I still use, and still remember to this day, was "Don't let them put the genie back in the bottle." An obvious reference to rights. And that's what we felt.

Richard Ravitch, the lead negotiator for the owners, resigned in December 1994.

Richard Ravitch: There was so much side negotiation going on, which is why I finally said fuck it, and quit.

Kasten: I was offered that job by Bud before Dick took it. I was then running the Braves, and the Hawks, and I'd been through a lot of collective bargaining negotiations.

I said to him very clearly, "Unless you empower that person, look at the history of people who have that job. We do not support those people."

I had things pretty good in Atlanta. They asked me for a name. I said, "There's a young lawyer at the NBA and you should ask him, he'd be great, but he won't take the job without real authority." And that was Gary Bettman. He didn't take it for the same reasons. And they hired Dick, and what happened to Dick?

That was the history of how we dealt with our own representatives. It's because we didn't have a lot of unity on our side. For sure, that's a problem. That's always a problem in collective bargaining, and the union was skilled at exploiting those divisions.

Orza: Ravitch thought he had more freedom than he really did. And the clubs thought he had less freedom than he thought he did. Ravitch being fired, that doesn't leave very much, and it was that step that began Rob's march towards the commissionership. Because Bud came to rely on him.

Ravitch: Fay Vincent and Bud Selig did not get along. One of the reasons that they hired me (in 1991) was they wanted to deprive Fay Vincent from any role in labor negotiations.

It was not a collegial atmosphere between Selig and Vincent. And I was caught in the middle of that one. Second of all, when we got to down to the negotiation, the major issue was whether we were going to change the economics of baseball and divide the national media revenues equally. (George) Steinbrenner was a bitter enemy and opponent of everything I was retained to do.

Manfred: I think one of Bud's biggest accomplishments is that he unified our approach to labor. When I started, there was the player relations committee, which was an owner committee, which was responsible for labor, and it was unclear what the commissioner's role was. Speaking with a single voice was a significant contributor to the positive labor relations that we've had since '94.

Fehr: You're proceeding from a premise which is wrong. Your premise is that somehow, if there had been a different person there who spoke differently, or wasn't as offensive, or something like that, the result would have been different. If you take professionals, and you say, "Forget what you would like to do. You're now going to switch sides." It turns out the arguments that you make are exactly the same. You just make the other sides' arguments. Because the issues are institutional, they are not personal.

I can say, "I'm only going to give you 10 dollars for your house" in a nasty, ugly way. Or I can say, "It's all I got, and it's 10 dollars and blah blah and your daughter's pretty," and all the rest of that.

It's still 10 dollars. It doesn't matter. That's the point.

Ravitch: I think Selig meant well. I just think he wanted to do everything himself. And all I know is I found out afterward from Gene and others that he was talking to the union himself. Which totally undercut me. I'm not sure it made much difference in the final analysis. The owners were truly divided.

And above all, they didn't want problems. 'Cause most of those guys were in it for the fun, not as a business, right?

In October 1994, the Bill Clinton White House asked a former United States labor secretary, Bill Usery Jr., to serve as a federal mediator in the work stoppage. On Feb. 7, 1995, Clinton gathered the parties at the White House.

Manfred: In the winter of '94-'95, really the big move came in November of '94. We suggested that we would back off the cap and move to a tax system. We really thought that that would get the negotiations going. Didn't have that effect.

Orza: Bud once told me — he guaranteed me — there would be a salary cap in baseball someday. And all I did was I sang a couple of verses from "You Can't Always Get What You Want" from Mick Jagger.

That's true. That was outside the White House. It was during the Clinton and (Al) Gore meeting, if you want to call what happened mediation. I'm not.

Fehr: It was a joke. It had no value. And there were all kind of agendas at work in the mediation that had nothing to do with the agendas of the parties trying to resolve the dispute.

Orza: They came in with what they thought was a halfway proposal, which the owners jumped all over. The owners approved the mediators' proposal in about a minute and a half.

The guy virtually eliminated free agency. They just didn't know what they were doing. That was obvious. They were going to try to split a baby, as if there was one single baby that was going to be split. I went crazy when I heard from one of the mediators.

Manfred: The day we went to the White House was a really important day. Some historical context is kind of important: Mediators don't ordinarily recommend solutions. They're process people. They help the parties get through a deal. They don't like to say, "This is what you should do." It's very unusual. So the fact the president asked them to make a recommendation was very unusual.

And when the recommendation came down, we were not jumping up and down. At least my client wasn't jumping up and down about the recommendation. We had to convince, and as a group, come to a consensus that the recommendation was acceptable to the clubs. We thought that was a very, very positive step.

Usually — as a matter of fact without exception, I believe, in the history of American labor relations — what happens is, if the president calls you to the White House after his mediators made a recommendation, he finds a way to make that deal happen.

Obviously, we were extraordinarily disappointed with the fact that we left the White House with no deal.

Kasten: That was very unfortunate. I could come up with stronger words than unfortunate. That was maybe the lowest moment in the whole thing.

Rich: It's a good thing we had a Democratic president at the time. At that time, public pressure on us was really not having any impact at all on our position.

This is pre-steroids. I left before the whole steroids thing broke. But I think once the steroids thing broke, the impact of bad publicity on the players really was different than it was during this negotiation.

But if we had a Republican president, and a Republican president came out and recommended a particular settlement, and the settlement was really bad, that would have been really a disaster. So we were kind of saved by a Democratic administration.

Cone: We spent like six hours in the White House. And that was a remarkable night. It ended with no resolution whatsoever. The players' side agreed to binding arbitration on the whole thing. And the owners just wanted arbitration with regard to a salary cap. That's kind of where it broke down that night, although President Clinton and Vice President Gore made a heck of an effort.

Ron Shapiro, longtime player agent with ties to the mediation process: I knew we really hit rock bottom when, despite all of everyone's efforts, the players showed up at the White House for a meeting with the president and some of 'em were in T-shirts and jeans. There was no decorum, no sense of the importance of what was happening. But there was also no sense anyone was going to listen at that point anyway.

The following year I saw Clinton at a baseball game, a pretty important baseball game, the Cal Ripken Iron Man game. A lot of people were concerned that the strike would undo Cal's consecutive streak.

On the night of Cal's game, the president looked at me and said, "What did you do to me?" He was kidding, but he was saying, "You set me up, I couldn't win."

Owners declared an impasse in bargaining on Dec. 23, 1994. The Players Association filed an unfair labor practice charge against the owners with the National Labor Relations Board four days later, saying that the impasse was not valid.

Rich: Implementation is black-letter labor law that applies in every single industry. And essentially says, an employer and a union are obligated to bargain in good faith. But if they reach a point of impasse, where no side can really move in any direction, that would then give the employer the opportunity to exert a certain type of economic pressure. They can implement the last offer that they made to the union.

On Feb. 16, 1995, spring training opened with replacement players. The NLRB issued a charge of unfair labor practice against the owners on March 14 to prevent implementation.

On March 26, the NLRB voted to authorize the injunction request. Five days later, U.S. District Court Judge Sonia Sotomayor upheld the injunction request and restored the system in place before the strike.

The replacement players were released on April 1. Camps opened and the strike ended April 5.

Fehr: Relief. Relief and pleasure.

As soon as it came down, we didn't know immediately in the first five minutes exactly what it would mean. But it was very clear that it was a major turning point in the discussions. And that it was a turning point in our direction.

Look, you never know for sure (what the decision will be). Once we got to that point, I was fairly confident that our case was a very good case, yes. But you have to ask yourself, what would have happened if we lost it?

It would've gone on. Players weren't going back.

Orza: Had they figured out a way to lawfully implement it, and open the season with scabs playing the games — because we would've still been on strike — we would've buried them. Five franchises would have gone out of business. The players would have held.

The fans would have destroyed the game. The quality of the play, the product they were putting out there would be laughable. And the writers would see it, and they would write it that way. It was the worst thing they would have done, to think that somehow, by opening the season with scabs, they were going to fight the players to succumb.

Glavine: Even that first year back, there was still a lot of animosity. Attendance was down. I remember my first game that I pitched that year. I was warming up in the bullpen in Atlanta, and some guy was giving me

crap: "Greedy players," and the whole nine yards. And he's like, "Here, let me start passing the hat around, get some money for you, you greedy bastard." There was a lot of that stuff that went on for a while.

Kasten: I was assigned a lot of the public statements. And this was odd, because I was kind of the spokesman for the owners' side, and the National League player rep wound up being the spokesman for the players' side, and that was Tommy. Tommy and I used to fly to meetings together and fly together. It was a very weird thing. We agreed early on we would never do a joint press conference.

Glavine: The mistake I made was I did every radio interview that I was asked to do, because I felt like if I get on the radio, if I get out there and I talk about the issues and I talk about what it is that we're really trying to fight for, that I would change peoples' minds. And I think all it did is make people hate me more, because they saw me on TV, or they heard me on the radio or they associated me with, it was my fault we were on strike. I was naive in thinking I could change peoples' minds.

Cone: It was the toughest time I think I've ever been through in my professional life, understanding what was happening. When replacement players were coming into play, there was a real split, because the coaches were part of the union. Coaches were on our side. But they worked with the replacement players, and there was a lot of first-base coaches and third-base coaches that were put in the middle, told they had to work with replacement players or they'd be fired. We expected loyalty on our side, because they were part of our union.

I remember going back to work, and I was still with the Royals. A lot of players are worried about ramifications. I was traded the next day to the Blue Jays.

I can't speak for (the Royals). But it certainly makes you wonder.

The end of the strike did not end the labor drama, although games were restored. Nineteen months of bargaining followed, including a famous scene during the 1996 World Series where Fehr and Selig had it out, and not for the first time.

Levine: I had been counsel to the Yankees. I knew Bud. I knew a lot of the owners for many years. I was labor commissioner of the City of New York at the time. I've been a practicing labor lawyer for many, many years. And one day I got a call from Bud. In my life, I always love big challenges. I thought if anyone in the world could do it, I could do it.

Rich: There would not have been a deal without Randy and Rob's efforts. I dealt pretty extensively with both of them (leading the technical bargaining team). And I'm talking nitty-gritty of proposals.

I never thought that I got any BS from Rob or Randy about what they thought they could sell to their side. You can't have a negotiation unless you have that kind of communication, and we didn't have that before the two of them were working together.

Levine: (Sotomayor in 1995) froze the status quo, and that's what led to the coming back after the strike. It's a very tough position to be in for a management representative, because your leverage is very minimal. You have a court order saying the union doesn't have to do anything.

It seemed what our people really wanted was a restraint on salaries. They wanted a revenue-sharing plan. In that respect, they made a bad mistake, because technically, revenue sharing probably shouldn't have been a mandatory subject of bargaining. Mandatory, meaning you have to negotiate with the union. But in the mix of their negotiations, they put it in themselves.

They wanted interleague play. But the background was very, very hard. The only way you can change anything is to bargain back to impasse.

Rich: Collective bargaining can get really, really heated. It's not a tea party, ever, in any industry. There are a couple of negotiating sessions where people went just nuts, screaming and yelling at each other.

Cone: The hawks on the owners' side felt like they took their shot. It didn't work. Now, it's time for calmer heads to prevail.

Levine: You needed to do an incremental deal. You needed to break through on these issues. You weren't going to change baseball overnight, you weren't going to change the negotiation overnight.

Ron Shapiro, Tom Reich, Randy Hendricks. There were a group of agents, principally those three, who were liaisons with me, and the union knew it. They were instrumental in getting it done.

Shapiro: We probably had some of the most high-profile players in the game. And although we had different styles of negotiation, we weren't people who went in and played scorched-earth negotiations. I can remember trying ideas on each side, without one side prejudicing the other, but each asking that the ideas be tried. And I can also remember being pushed back a little bit, especially at times by the Players Association, with the concern that I might take it too far. But the bottom line is it was basically shuttling information, occasionally coming up with an idea.

Hendricks: We weren't freelancing. But we talked to a lot of the owners, people that you've known for 15-20 years that you made deals with.

Rich: By the time we get back to work after Sonia Sotomayor issues the injunction, this is like almost a year. We go into a second season that we're into negotiations. So everyone on both sides is really very guarded.

Levine: We get to August 1996. Now, I'm a labor lawyer and Rob's a good labor lawyer, and I realize, I'm at impasse. Rob and I go over to see Don and his team and I said to them, "Unless we make a deal and get serious, I'm going to go court Monday to Judge Sotomayor to ask her to lift the injunction. I think we're at impasse." We have tedious notes, records. We just can't reach an agreement, and I have no more proposals.

That led to a marathon weekend of negotiation. We negotiated all Friday night, all Saturday night, into late Sunday, and we reached a tentative agreement. Rob and I do it. We talk to Selig and the entire labor committee (Kasten, McMorris, Reinsdorf, John Moores of the Padres among them), all the hawks, everybody's OK.

And then sure enough, as is always the case in baseball, everybody's talking, and now the deal isn't good enough.

Rich: Rob and Randy would negotiate meticulously. And then this happened several times where Bud just blew it up, and said, "Well, I'm not going to take it to the owners." So that was immensely frustrating.

Levine: We're in Atlanta during the World Series, Yankees are playing, and Rob and I meet with Don. And he gives us a little more on all of these things. Plays with the luxury tax, plays with the revenue-sharing plan and so forth. And we go back to Bud and the owners, still not good enough.

So Don says to me, "I'm done. I'm not doing anything. I want to go see Bud Selig." So Rob and I go to Milwaukee with Don, and it's just fucking brutal. I mean, Don just ripped into Bud like you couldn't believe and said, "Fuck you, now you're not at impasse anymore."

The whole world knows, the media knows, we have a tentative agreement. And Bud Selig in the World Series at Yankee Stadium goes and gives an interview to people and says, "We don't have an agreement." It was famous, this had been widely reported.

In an office right outside of George's office at the stadium, Don runs up there. I'm in the room, Bud's in the room, and Don just ripped into Bud. Pardon my language: "Fuck you, can't trust you, any of them." Bud started screaming back at Don. It's really, really ugly.

The World Series is going on at the time, and George sticks his head in and says, “Both of you, shut the fuck up, we got a World Series going on here, you’re affecting my guests!”

Right around Thanksgiving, the owners voted for the agreement. And I got the hell out of there and become deputy mayor.

Fehr: What produced the 20 years subsequent to that of calm was in large part A, the fact that we went through the catharsis. And secondly, that in large part, they bought our revenue sharing idea. We wrote most of it to make it work. Basically our ideas. And it worked. You didn’t hear after that some of the small-income teams complaining nearly as much.

Now, it is accurate that at the same time revenue began to go up, and that of course is part of it.

Levine: The owners got these benchmarks that weren’t in existence. But it was done in an incremental way. The revenue sharing was incremental. It didn’t kill the big-market teams. And the small-market teams got money, but not as much as they wanted. The luxury tax, it had a bite, but it was a little bite. It wasn’t the giant bite that it is today.

When I look back at it today and see where we’ve come, it changed everything. Everything.

Orza: They’re moguls. They are all terribly wealthy people investing hundreds and hundreds of millions dollars, all for a cause that history has subsequently proven was not worthwhile. I mean, not one owner has gone bankrupt. Not one owner’s franchise has been devalued. Not one owner has been forced to sell his car.

They all said the sport was going to go down the tubes if we didn’t agree to a salary cap. You think baseball’s gone down the tubes since 1994?

Manfred: I’m not a win-lose in labor disputes. That is a very kind of — I won’t be pejorative. I think it’s the wrong way to look at labor negotiations. Everybody lost in ’94. Everybody.

And what do I mean by that? We didn’t accomplish everything that we were looking to accomplish. But the players inflicted damage on the game that took us literally years to recover from, in terms of our revenues. And to the extent that our revenues were down, their salaries were down. So it was not just the lost days of pay that they endured in ’94. It was in the ensuing three or four years, we had revenues that were lower than they would’ve been. And as a result, players earned less money.

Fehr: You can define anything as a win or a loss depending on what your expectations are and how you pitch it. The short answer is, there were fundamental issues at stake regarding the very structure as to how players were going to be paid, with the background of 100 years of a reserve system of which the players had no bargaining power and no choice about where they played. And from the players’ standpoint, the objective was to preserve the freedom that has been secured 20 years before, 19 years before. And that wasn’t done without cost, obviously, but it was done.

Manfred: I’m probably really good at one thing, and that was the labor relations part of my career. My ability to navigate those waters, part of my education was living through that strike. I learned certain things that I think are really important. And you know, I try to continue to live by them.

I hope there’s enough institutional memory on Third Avenue (where the MLBPA office used to be) that they haven’t lost track of the lessons. There’s a lot of ‘em.

I look back on that experience — the players may say they won, and in many senses, I understand that. We were enjoined, we had to take them back to work, we didn’t accomplish a lot of the things we were looking to. Won in the sense: Gave up a bunch of salary, had reduced salaries for years to come and ended up making an agreement that actually moved the economics in our direction.

Does that sound like a “W” to you?

Clark: The challenge in '94-95 was about fighting off a plan by a group of owners to declare an impasse in bargaining. They wanted to replace major-league players with scabs and they wanted to force a salary cap system on players. In that way, it's ironic that we find ourselves again where free agency is under attack and player values are being called into question. So it's a similar type of conversation. Not the same, but similar.

It impacted everything in regard to my career. It's why I got involved as a young player in the Players Association.

Fehr: You can't isolate '94 from everything else that happened, leading up to that. The first negotiation after that was difficult, even though it got done without a stoppage. What I would want players to know is the same thing I would tell them if I was still there: Your unity is all that matters. If you don't have it, you're not going to get anywhere. And getting good results is not cost-free.

### **As Mike Lynch departs Channel 5, we relive the golden age of Boston TV sports anchors**

Steve Buckley

Before there was Twitter, Facebook or Instagram, there was Bob Lobel.

Before there were two all-sports radio stations in Boston, there was John Dennis.

And before there were blogs, podcasts and YouTube, there was Mike Lynch, the longtime sports anchor at WCVB (Channel 5) in Boston who'll be calling it a night at the conclusion of Thursday's 11 p.m. newscast. There no doubt will be on-air farewells, perhaps a tear or two, and then, said Lynch, who turns 65 in September, "I'll just get in the car, go home, and figure out what's next."

But to say Lynch's departure marks the end of an era in Boston television isn't accurate, and for the simple reason that we're talking about an era that ended years ago. It's just that Lynch, a Swampscott native and former two-sport Harvard athlete, turned out to be more durable than all the big-name players he covered — even Carl Yastrzemski, who was 43 when he took his last big-league swing. But as the television industry kept changing, along with the way people get their news, Lynch, who debuted on Channel 5 in 1982, survived ownership changes, management changes and changes on the news desk.

He is the last of the Big Three sports anchors of the 1980s. John Dennis anchored at Channel 7 (its call letters morphed from WNAC to WNEV to WHDH) from 1982 until 1998 before reinventing himself as a fixture on WEEL, Boston's first all-sports radio station. Lobel, easily the best-known sports anchor in Boston television history, manned Channel 4 (WBZ) from 1981 until being on the wrong end of a station-wide purge that took place in 2008.

Dino. Lobie. Lynchie.

Their heyday was the 1980s and '90s, and they covered Boston sports with a star power that seems unimaginable by today's standards. These three amigos of the 6 and 11 o'clock sportscasts were as well-known as the athletes they covered, their comings and goings sometimes meriting a line or two in Norma Nathan's "The Eye" gossip column in the Boston Herald. At a time when "Cheers" dominated prime-time TV ratings from the fictitious Boston bar where "everybody knows your name," everybody in Greater Boston knew the names Mike Lynch, Bob Lobel and John Dennis. Heck, Lobel was so well known he even appeared on "Cheers."

If you wanted the score of that night's Bruins game, or a replay of that towering Jim Rice home run into the summer night, or a sound bite of Larry talking about Dr. J., you made it home in time to catch Lynchie, or Lobie, or Dino. If you were late — that is, if you tuned in to Channel 4 and saw Johnny Carson talking about Ronald Reagan and not Bob Lobel talking about Roger Clemens — it meant you had missed the 11 o'clock news and would be going to bed sports-starved.

It was the Wild, Wild West of Boston television when everyone watched the news at 6 and 11 and the city's three network affiliates waged Steel Cage Matches for ratings points. This isn't to say the current roster of Boston's sportscasters lacks personality and talent. Channel 4's three-piece-suit-wearin' Steve Burton muscled to the front of every media scrum and is a "name" at WBZ after years serving as Lobel's understudy. It doesn't hurt that he's the son of the late Ron Burton, who in 1960 was the first player drafted in the history of the original Boston Patriots

Also at Channel 4, veteran Dan Roche is a cheery, upbeat voice-of-the-people type whose questions can be heard at practically every news conference. Butch Stearns at Channel 25 is a former sports star from Braintree, which works well for him because he comes across on-air like he's everybody's old high school buddy. Joe Amorosino has won a truckload of awards during the more than 20 years he's been at Channel 7, and Raul Martinez at NBC/Channel 10 has that Lobel-like, I'd-do-the-job-for-nuthin' look about him. Ditto with Channel 25's Tom Leyden and Channel 7's Trey Daerr.

But it's not their fault it's not the 1980s. And the 1980s was when being a sports anchor in Boston meant you were a first-class, board-certified, highly compensated celebrity.

Over the past several weeks I've interviewed Lynch, Lobel and Dennis — separately — about being a sports anchor in the 1980s and how they got there. I asked about money, about rivalries, about interactions with athletes. And, yes, I asked them to share their thoughts on today's television news and if they'd do it all over again. Some answers have been condensed for clarity. And I started here: What was it like?

Lobel: There was this night at the Garden, Bobby Orr is back because he's doing a thing for BayBank, and he skates onto the ice in a BayBank sweater. I think the Bruins were playing Quebec that night and it was between periods. And they have me in the net. I had Gerry Cheevers' mask on, that carved-up thing he used to use. He loaned it to me. Reggie Lemelin gave me lessons. I think every goal Bobby scored was like a thousand dollars to this charity. I think he scored 18. The only shot he missed was the one he shot at my cup, and of course he did that on purpose. It was Bobby Orr. He could do anything he wanted on purpose. That's the kind of stuff we would do. It was somewhat magical being on TV in the '80s. I loved it and I understood it. It was crazy.

Dennis: We were very competitive, Bob and Mike and I. We had interns watching and logging each others' sportscasts every night to make sure we didn't miss something that Bob or Mike had, or to feel good about something that Mike or Bob didn't have. For the most part, we were pretty friendly.

For the most part?

Dennis: Obviously with any kind of competition, I wouldn't call it stress but there was a desire to beat the other guy's brains in journalistically. I don't think I ever went to a party with Bob or Mike. We never socialized together. Obviously, we showed up for live shots at the Garden or Fenway Park every night ... we never socialized but we were competitive and I think all three of us were good for each other.

Lobel: I would say that our relationship was competitive. But with John, I guess for some reason he didn't like our attitude, we didn't like his attitude. That's we as in Channel 4, the sports office. I don't know, how should I say this, I had a much better relationship with Lynch than with John in those days.

Dennis: It's just the way it was. I was not socializing with the people I was competitive with. It's like in baseball — it's different now but the old-school guys would not go out for dinner with the guys on the other team or pat asses at the batting cage. It was business, that's all. There was no rancor, just trying to beat each others' brains in.

And yet sometimes they — that is, Lynch and Lobel — helped each other out.

Lynch: I'll never forget the night Ray Bourque took his jersey off, and he had the No. 77 underneath. And they walked off center ice at the old Garden, those two steps you'd go down to the locker rooms there,

and we're all interviewing (Phil) Esposito, and Espo's crying. Our shooter Dickie Dunham was there, and Channel 4 was there, and I'd guess Tommy Rehkamp was with Lobel, and maybe Jack Crowley with Dino, and we finish the interview and Espo went up to watch the game, and Dick Dunham said, "My recorder didn't work. I didn't get it." So I called Lobel up and I said I have a problem. He said don't worry about it, we'll make a dub, send a cab over — he sent a copy to us. That's the kind of relationship we had. Now if it was an exclusive interview, different story. But if it's something where we're all there and something happens through no fault of anyone, no problem.

Lobel: I don't remember that. There are a lot of things I don't recall that happened. But those things happened, and on a personal level. Whether it was myself, or (producer) Alan Miller, or whoever made the call from Channel 5. It would have been different if it was 7, but on the other hand maybe not if they would have humbled themselves to make the call and ask us. Who are we not to give it to them? Because it could have been us. We could have needed them as much as they needed us.

Dennis: I was not aware of that story, but this a good one from my first year in spring training, February of '79. Jack Crowley was my long-term, forever sports photographer and we were shooting film. In those days, you'd shoot whatever you were shooting and you would take that film and you would put it in a canister and one of us would have to go to either the Tampa or the Orlando airport and put it on Delta Dash. You'd put it on a plane and someone would get it at Logan, run it to the TV station, put it into the processor, bring the film out and then edit your piece. So I'm in spring training and Jack is breaking me in and he says, "Since I carry the camera and all the equipment down here, you're aware the reporter has to run the film to the airport." And it was an hour, either way, whether it's Tampa or Orlando. So like an idiot I drive to the airport, one hour out, one hour back, Jack's sitting at the pool at the Holiday Inn with a cocktail in his hand. When I got back home a week later I mentioned it to someone and they said, "No, no, no. Those aren't the rules. You're supposed to take turns." Jack took advantage of me. Long story short, the following year I called him on it. I said, "That's bullshit. This year we're taking turns."

Jack Crowley, 85, retired and living on Cape Cod, said, "That's about right. And if I had gone to the airport, by the time I got back the spring training morning session was over. So he agreed to it and I caught on and I figured I might as well keep him going and tell him he has to do it even though sometimes I'd get my shooting done early."

Lynch: It was a nightly contest to see who could cover the same story differently or have something unique, or break a story. Breaking a story was a real big deal back then, because you had to wait till 6 o'clock. With no internet, if you had something you were biting your fingernails that nobody else had it before 6 o'clock. And we all went through this. Breaking a story was a real coup and a feather in your cap.

The ratings battle in those days in the ages 25-54 demographic was strictly a competition between Channels 4 and 5, with Channel 7 a distant third. By way of example, the Nielsen ratings for November 1986 show WCVB (Channel 5) getting an 8 share in the 6 p.m. time slot, with WBZ (Channel 4) getting a 7 share. WNEV (Channel 7) had a 3. In the 11 p.m. time slot, WBZ earned a 9 share, with WCVB earning a 6. WNEV again had a 3 share. "These days, the stations are lucky to get a 1," said a former Boston television executive. "There are just so many different options now."

Dennis: (Lobel) had the ratings and I think the popularity. Lynchie had the local ties, the Swampscott guy and that sort of stuff, and Channel 7 in those days was such a distant third and there was so much turnover. My list of anchors I worked with on 6 and 11 was Jack Cole, John Henning, Tom Ellis, R.D. Sahl, Brad somebody or other, some pretty boy from somewhere. Channel 7 was always looking for the right combination. They had a big buildup when they brought in the Dream Team of Tom Ellis and Robin Young. That was another iteration of Channel 7 shaking things up and saying, hey, let's see if we can knock a couple of ratings points off of 4 and put them in our basket. There was constant turmoil and news directors coming and going and anchormen and anchorwomen coming and going.

Lynch: You either liked Chet (Curtis) and Nat (Jacobson) and Dickie (Albert) and Mike Lynch (on Channel 5), or you liked Liz (Walker), Jack (Williams), Bruce (Schwoegler) and Lobel on Channel 4. And I mean

no disrespect, but Channel 7 changed anchors a lot, but they had Harvey Leonard for weather and Dino for sports.

Of the three, only John Dennis had worked extensively in television before landing Boston TV gigs. Lynch and Lobel had been working in radio.

Dennis: You're talking about a kid from Kansas City — I'm not from Kansas City but I worked in Kansas City before I came here — stepping into something and coming out of it smelling like a rose, in terms of timing, with Larry and The Big Three, Squish the Fish and all that was happening. It was tremendous ... I came to Boston in the fall of 1978 doing weekends and I started doing 6 and 11 in 1982.

Lobel: I was doing radio in New Hampshire when WBZ offered me an afternoon radio job. That very same week one of my best friends in Manchester, he had a Dodge dealership and he wanted me to be his sales manager. You can't make this up. And I said, "You know, Doug, I have to think about this, but I don't think I can turn the 'BZ thing down. It's what I've been doing here in Manchester." 'BZ back then was Larry Glick, Jerry Williams, Guy Mainella. There was no social media, no internet. It was those guys and their 50,000 watts and everyone knew who they were. So I moved to Boston to do radio.

Doug MacKenzie, who owned MacKenzie Motors, said, "I had him tested through a testing facility I used to hire people, and they said, 'If you don't hire him, we will.'" I really thought he would make a difference for us but he went on to bigger things. We're still friends. We still golf together."

Lynch: I was doing radio with Brian Leary with WITS, we did Harvard football together, we were very good friends and he was the weekend guy at Channel 5. And Bill O'Connell had left to go to Channel 7, Don Gillis had been around for a long time and had a lot of vacation, and Clark Booth had a deal where he didn't have to anchor. He was more comfortable doing stories. So Leary would work these 30- and 40-day stretches and he finally went to (news director) Jim Thistle and he said, "I really need somebody just to give me a day or two off here and there." And Jim said, "Who you got?" and he said he worked with this guy Mike Lynch in radio, why don't we bring him in.

Lobel: When there was an opening on weekends on the TV side at WBZ they auditioned three people. I think they hired me basically because I was already in the building, not because of anything else.

Lynch: They brought me in on Friday night, March 26, 1982, to watch the 6 o'clock news. So I came in, I wore a jacket and tie, and I sort of stood in the wings and watched. And as the news went on, my jaw started dropping, thinking I could never do this. When it was over they sat me in a chair and they gave me Leary's script, and they said look into that camera and here's your audition. I had never been in a television station in my life.

Lobel: And then Liz Walker came to WBZ, and she and I worked really well together on weekends. We became good friends and it showed on the air. When they moved her to Monday through Friday to anchor the news they moved me over with her to keep her company.

Lynch: So I did the audition and I looked like a mannequin and when I finished they said let's go up to Jim Thistle's office. And Jim was sitting there, it was Friday night, it was the end of his work week, and he had seen the tape, he watched it in his monitor and he said, "What do you think?" And I said, "Mr. Thistle, give me six months, eight hours a day of rehearsal, maybe I might be ready." He said, "Well you don't have that much time, you're on tomorrow night at 6. Good luck." And that's how it started.

Although Dennis would wind up making more money than Lobel and Lynch during his morning-drive days on WEEI, it appears he was the lowest paid of the three during the 80s.

Dennis: I was making between \$300,000 and \$400,000.

Lynch: Let me put it the way — I never made Ted Williams money. And by that I mean 406 — Ted hit .406 in 1941. I didn't make 406. I made under that.

Lobel: I was north of \$500,000.

Dennis: At the height of his TV career, Bob was making between 5 and 6. That was generally acknowledged.

Lynch: I never made what Bob made. I guess we had Chet, Nat and Dickie, and I was more than happy to be the insignificant right fielder in that lineup. I was happy to have that job and do it where I grew up. I had Don Gillis' old job. And then in 2009 everybody got whacked and I'm slowly making my way back to where I was, but I'll never get there. But I'm happy. I'm not complaining.

Lynch was the local kid who went to Harvard and in 1975 kicked a 26-yard field goal with 33 seconds remaining to lift Harvard to a 10-7 victory over Yale before a crowd of 66,846 at Yale Bowl in the 100th edition of The Game. In 1977, with Boston College pitcher George Ravanis one out away from firing a no-hitter against Harvard, Lynch crushed a curveball inside the third-base bag. To this day Ravanis keeps an autographed photo of Lynch on the wall of his family-owned Cambridge restaurant, Frank's Steakhouse. This kind of "hometown guy" status has served Lynch well, especially when his station introduced its "High Five" campaign to honor local high school athletes.

Lynch: The station wanted to make it a professional athlete of the week, like let's give it to Bruce Hurst because he pitched two shutouts this week. And I said, "Bruce Hurst doesn't care if we give him a High Five." When I first started I went to every Rotary Club luncheon because I was trying to make a name for myself. I would go to every Lions Club, every Knights of Columbus banquet and I'd be everywhere. And one of the most-asked questions I would get was why don't you do more high school sports. So I said why don't we do a High Five for (high schools). It was Sept. 27, I think, 1985, the day of Hurricane Gloria, and we did a piece on a guy named Joe Betro, a running back from Walpole. His father was the police chief. We said Joe Betro ran for four touchdowns against Braintree last Saturday afternoon and he is this week's High Five. Well, when I got up to the sports office the phone started to ring off the hook. And it was people saying, "Hey we've got a kid from Framingham that's twice as good as him," and "We got a kid in Waltham that's a heck of a running back, why don't you take a look at him?" "We got a soccer player here in Masconomet, why don't you take a look at her." So I said, OK, we're on to something here. And that's how it started.

Lynch's reputation was also enhanced by WCVB's goofy "I Like Mike" ad campaign, which featured such Boston stars as Ray Bourque, Wade Boggs and Dave Cowens as well as national celebrities — James Earl Jones! — making cameos and singing the "I Like Mike" jingle. It turns out the campaign was suggested by former Massachusetts governor and 1988 Democratic presidential candidate Michael Dukakis.

Lynch: After he lost in '88 we used him as a political analyst for all the elections and one night he says, "You ought to do a campaign, like the 'I Like Ike' thing when Eisenhower ran for president in the '50s." Somehow it got to our creative services department, and sure enough the buttons came out, they were the red, white and blue. I was flattered and humbled. You can see the spots on YouTube now. My kids every once in a while play them.

Bob Lobel was known for pushing his on-set "Panic Button" when things weren't going well for one of the Boston teams, and he would exclaim, "Why can't we get players like that?" when a former Boston athlete had a big game against the Red Sox, Bruins, Celtics or Patriots. But perhaps Lobel's biggest night on the air took place in 1992, during his Sunday night "Sports Final" program, when he did a live in-studio interview with Boston sports icons Larry Bird, Bobby Orr and Ted Williams.

Lobel: I'm finding out now, all these years later, how big a deal it was. At the time, to me and our producer Alan Miller, we did a show, we did a television show. It was creative, it was unique and it got a lot of attention, and that was our goal. One day I said why don't we do Bird and Orr, two winter guys, put them together, it would be interesting, see if they'd do it. I asked Orr first, because I knew him, and then Bird signed on. And then a week before, Ted Williams' kid, John Henry, came into our office. He said I heard

you're doing something with Orr and Bird. Would you like dad to sit in with you guys? I said, "I think that would work."

Alan Miller, who produced the show, said, "We didn't have a green room, so we brought Ted, Bobby and Larry into the news director's office. So it was them, Bob and me, just talking. But it might as well have just been Ted. He commanded the room. You should have seen the look in Larry Bird's eyes. He was just in awe of Ted Williams. It was quite a night. And that whole thing was Bob Lobel's idea."

Lobel: I've never watched that show. Still. I've never watched it. Because I know I would drive me crazy, wanting to ask questions I didn't ask, or seeing questions I did ask that were stupid.

For John Dennis, being the No. 3 guy in a two-team race made things difficult. But one area where Dennis could excel was in boxing — something that's not as big a deal today but was important in the 1980s during the rise of Marvelous Marvin Hagler, the middleweight boxing phenom from Brockton, Mass.

Dennis: Bob Lobel always had the ratings at Channel 4. They were the most-watched TV station. But we all tried to pick out our little niche where we could accelerate our coverage and bring something that nobody else could. Lynchie's was the High Five thing, obviously, which I guess is still going on. Bob had the aw-shucks humor, the why-can't-we-get-players-like-that-push-the-panic-button-type thing. And I guess early on I sort of identified myself, for all the other stuff, with my relationship with Goody and Pat Petronelli, who were Hagler's trainers. I like to say that I covered Marvin when he had hair. I forget who he was fighting, I don't know if it was Willie "The Worm" Monroe but it was somebody of that era and that ilk, and there was a picture of Marvin with fuckin' hair on his head. So I knew Marvin — and Goody and Pat, God rest their souls — coinciding with Marvin's rise to superstardom in middleweight boxing. I'd always get calls from them, knew when they were going to fight, all the stuff. Marvin Hagler was sort of a niche that I settled into. And I will say this without fear of reservation or someone disputing it, because it's just my opinion, but of all the things I have covered in Boston sports for 40 years, without question, and it's not even a close race, the most exciting, the most amazing, the most nerve-wracking thing I have ever seen was Hagler-Hearns at Caesars Palace in 1985. The buildup to it was remarkable. The animosity between the (Thomas) Hearns camp and the Hagler camp on the other side, you could cut the tension with a knife.

Dennis also made it a point to cover every news conference he could, often asking pointed questions.

Dennis: I always would recall Alan Miller being there for Bob, or Bob Neumeier being there for Bob, or whoever Lynchie's weekend guy was, I guess it was Jack (Edwards) for a while. And some other people. But I would generally see the reporters there as opposed to Bob or Mike.

Lobel also had a reputation for showing up at the station just minutes before a newscast.

Lobel: That's a little exaggerated. Pretty much throughout the day I was paying attention to what was going on in the world that I was covering or talking about. I pretty much knew what was in that script. The closest I ever came to missing the sportscast was 10 seconds. I was caught in traffic on the Southeast Expressway. I was coming from some thing on the Cape, some event. I had called them and said it's going to be close, just hand me my IFB — which is the thing you stick in your ear. Just give me my script, and I'll just walk right into the studio. Which is exactly what happened. I just sat down, I did it. I never made that mistake again. It was serious then, but now it's one of those stories you tell and people say, "Wow."

Dennis, a recovering alcoholic who left WEEI in 2016, splits the year between homes in Florida and "two miles from the Boston Marathon starting line." Until recently he was a lively and frequent presence on Twitter, until, he said, "Twitter croaked me because of my conservative views." Lobel does some occasional radio in New Hampshire and until this year was a part-time public address announcer at Fenway Park. "I did in-stadium announcing when I was at the University of Vermont before I ever did anything on radio or television," he said. "And now here I am, up until this year, doing in-stadium announcing. What goes around comes around, I guess." Lobel suffers from spinal stenosis and needs crutches to get around, though he can still golf thanks to a specialized cart. He also takes medical marijuana for pain relief after "hovering around addiction to oxycontin" following knee replacement surgery. As for Lynch, he says he

has every intention of working again in TV or radio. The three men have differing views on today's mediascape.

Lynch: I think today's sportscasters have the same hopes and visions and excitement and anticipation that we all had. They don't know that things have changed. They only know what they know right now. They have an opportunity to work in Boston in a great sports market with teams that win all the time. No, I don't feel sorry for them. I'm happy for them. I'm envious. I wouldn't mind starting over again. It'd be a different challenge.

Lobel: No, I don't feel bad for them. I would rather still be there. I think they're lucky to be there. I think they're lucky to have what they have. But I had sports steroids.

Lobel is not referring to the athletes being on steroids — even though they were, of course — but to the sportscasts themselves being six, seven, sometimes eight minutes long. The sports segments on today's newscasts rarely stray beyond three minutes.

Lobel: It's not anything these guys, or women, did to make it the way it is. It's the whole natural change in the way television has become part of our lives. It's so taken for granted now. Twenty years ago, it wasn't taken for granted.

Dennis: If I were advising a young person, a senior at Emerson or BU's communications school, about how to improve their communication ability, talk radio by far is so much more helpful in creating a talented and successful broadcaster than anchoring the 6 and 11 o'clock sports for a couple of minutes every night. I mean think about it. Essentially what Bob and Mike and I did for many, many years would be ... basically what we did was, "Hey, good evening, this team beat that team by this score. Here's the highlights! And here's what they had to say in the locker room! OK, and down in Foxboro this team beat that team by this score, here's the highlights and here's what they had to say in the locker room. Goodnight, Chet! Goodnight, Jack! Goodnight, Liz!" I mean, it was sort of mindless, and you were reading off of a prompter and there's really no cliff that you're standing on that makes you think and communicate in a measured way, or express thoughts and ideas and defend them. Which is exactly what talk radio does. You have to understand the subject, you have to create and form an opinion about that particular subject and then you have to have the ability to defend whatever side you take, whatever take you have, against our co-hosts and against callers. You really have to stretch your communication muscles far more than being a television anchor."

## **\* *The New York Times***

### **Yordan Alvarez, a Forgotten Deadline Pickup, Is Taking a Star Turn**

Tyler Kepner

The Houston Astros have mastered the art of the high-impact midseason trade. In 2017 they got Justin Verlander, an ace who helped lead them to their first World Series title. Last season it was reliever Ryan Pressly, who has since become an All-Star. This summer they welcomed starters Zack Greinke and Aaron Sanchez, among others.

But in 2016, things were different. The Astros had won a wild-card berth the year before, but they were trailing for a playoff spot at the Aug. 1 non-waiver trading deadline. Their post-season deficit was just two and a half games, but Jeff Luhnow, their analytically-minded general manager, did not like his odds.

"We estimated on the day of the deadline our probability of making the playoffs around 25 percent," Luhnow said. "And that wasn't enough for us."

Instead of adding, Luhnow subtracted a couple of middle relievers. He sent Scott Feldman to the Toronto Blue Jays for Lupe Chavez, a pitcher now in Class A. And he sent Josh Fields to the Los Angeles Dodgers for Yordan Alvarez, who since a call-up in June is off to one of the hottest starts in major league history.

Alvarez, a 22-year-old designated hitter with power and patience, swatted three homers on Saturday at Camden Yards, driving in seven of the Astros' 23 runs in a romp over the Orioles. The outburst gave him 51 runs batted in, the most ever for a player in his first 45 games. The previous record-holder, Ted Williams, had 47.

"It's something I just heard about right now," Alvarez said later, through an interpreter. "It's a point of pride for me, but it's not something I think about day to day. I just think about doing my work."

After going 2 for 5 in Sunday's 8-7 loss, Alvarez was hitting .355 with 17 homers and a 1.164 on-base plus slugging percentage. He is a middle-of-the-order force for a team that is 77-41, a low-cost cornerstone who should help keep the first-place Astros contending for years.

"He has a lot of talent and we all know that," said second baseman Jose Altuve, the winner of the American League Most Valuable Player Award in 2017. "But how humble he is, how smart he is and how passionate he is at home plate, it's amazing."

The Astros nearly signed Alvarez in 2016, after he defected from Cuba, but the Dodgers got him for \$2 million. About six weeks later, as they shopped Fields, the Astros asked the Dodgers for Alvarez. The Dodgers balked — because they believed Houston wanted a different Cuban player, pitcher Yadier Alvarez, who had signed for \$16 million.

The Dodgers agreed to trade Yordan Alvarez — Yadier has not yet reached the majors — and Charlie Gonzalez was overjoyed. Gonzalez, Luhnow's senior scouting adviser, had tracked Alvarez closely and marveled at his advanced knowledge of the strike zone.

"A lot of guys are feast or famine — they'll have big, raw power, but they don't have a really good feel for hitting, they don't recognize pitches and they're not a good tracker of pitches," Gonzalez said. "This guy slowed everything down in the box and stayed inside his swing. His mental composure was very mature for a kid his age."

Alvarez had not played a game with the Dodgers organization at the time of the trade, but he advanced quickly through the Astros' minor league system and impressed Manager A.J. Hinch with his presence and maturity this spring. Alvarez overwhelmed Class AAA pitchers — he batted .343 with 23 homers in 56 games — and arrived in Houston on June 9, swatting an opposite-field homer off a changeup in his debut.

"That approach — you look changeup, you get changeup, you stay on it and hit it 420 feet to left-center — that's a good first start," Hinch said. "As he's gotten pitched a little differently and they move the ball around, he's continued to draw his walks. He's gone up with a very diligent plan and executed it."

Alvarez was the A.L. Rookie of the Month in June — and in July. At 6 feet 5 inches and 225 pounds, he is close in size to the Hall of Famer Willie McCovey, another left-handed slugger who wore No. 44 and arrived at midseason. The San Francisco Giants called up McCovey in July 1959, and he hit .354 with 13 homers to win the Rookie of the Year Award.

McCovey, Carlos Delgado, Josh Hamilton, Dave Parker — pick your fearsome left-handed slugger, and so far, Alvarez fits right in. He is the Houston version of Gleyber Torres, the Yankees' prize from that same 2016 trading deadline. The Yankees were also in selling mode that summer, trading reliever Aroldis Chapman to the Chicago Cubs for Torres, now a two-time All-Star infielder.

Chapman helped the Cubs win the World Series before returning to the Yankees as a free agent. Fields pitched well for the Dodgers but faltered against his old team in Game 2 of the 2017 World Series, allowing consecutive homers to Altuve and Carlos Correa in his only appearance.

The Astros were champions a few games later, and their chances for this year are greater because of Alvarez. They played the odds, they got a little lucky, but they got their man.

“You never really know, because there are always surprises out there, guys you thought should be doing better than they are,” Gonzalez said. “I felt really comfortable with him because I never saw him fail. I never saw a bad showcase, and he was always so consistent.

“Now, to this degree? I can’t say I expected that. This is monumental.”

## **\* *The Los Angeles Times***

### **Angels lower the (Anthony) Bemboom on the Red Sox in 10-inning victory**

Maria Torres

Anthony Bemboom pulled up to Fenway Park at 12:45 p.m., a mere 20 minutes before the Angels closed a four-game series Sunday afternoon. He had never worn an Angels jersey in a major league game. Nor had he caught most of the pitchers on the staff.

But the 2012 draft pick of the Angels, recalled from triple-A Salt Lake because of Kevan Smith’s back issues, didn’t let hesitation cloud his mind. He relied on adrenaline, and some five hours of sleep, to carry him into his newest challenge.

The approach served Bemboom well.

In the Angels’ 5-4 victory over the Boston Red Sox in 10 innings, Bemboom drove in the go-ahead run in the 10th, hitting the first pitch into right field for a single that scored Kole Calhoun from third base.

Bemboom hadn’t even swung a bat since learning Saturday night that the Angels, who reacquired him from the Tampa Bay Rays last month, needed him.

“I wasn’t thinking about it too much,” said Bemboom, who made his MLB debut in May and only had five plate appearances before sustaining a knee injury. “It’s one of those things, you take a million swings, you’re thinking about it a lot. Honestly that probably helped me a little bit, to simplify it.”

Bemboom entered the game at catcher in the eighth inning, and was tested immediately. With the score tied 4-4, reliever Cam Bedrosian issued a walk to Mitch Moreland, and the Red Sox lifted the lumbering designated hitter for pinch-runner Mookie Betts. Betts broke for second base on the fifth pitch to Christian Vazquez and Bemboom threw him out by several feet.

The deadlock persisted until Bemboom, who made it to tripleA with the Angels before going to the Colorado Rockies and eventually the Rays, came to the plate in the 10th inning.

“I’m sure he had some adrenaline,” manager Brad Ausmus said. “New club, new team, back in the big leagues. That helps. He made an excellent throw. It’s tough to catch guys you’ve never seen before, especially with the shadows creeping over home plate.”

Before Mike Trout crushed a ball over the 37-foot-tall fence in left field here Saturday, Calhoun liked to tease the Angels star for not having hit a home run at Fenway. Calhoun hadn’t even homered in Boston himself.

Calhoun remedied that in the eighth, sending a 97-mph fastball from Matt Barnes over the Angels bullpen in right-center field. It was his 26th of the season, which tied a career high. The towering solo shot tied the score 4-4 and absolved rookie Patrick Sandoval of a loss.

Sandoval followed up his MLB debut from last week with a gutsy performance, but was charged with four runs over 4 2/3 innings. He struggled at times executing his pitches. In a second-inning sequence, he issued back-to-back walks on eight balls in a row. The latter occurred with the bases loaded and pushed in a run. It cut the Angels lead to 3-1.

Sandoval bounced back and retired five in a row, but he gave up a two-run homer in the fourth to Vazquez and left three runners on base for reliever Ty Buttrey in the fifth. A passed ball by Max Stassi allowed Boston to take a 4-3 lead.

Fortunately for the Angels, who have won two in a row after a season-worst eight-game losing streak, Buttrey pitched 1 2/3 scoreless innings. Bedrosian followed with seven uneventful outs, maneuvering around two walks and a hit. Closer Hansel Robles retired all four batters he faced to secure a series split.

And Bemboom, a 29-year-old who has continued to chase a major league dream despite a number of injuries and team changes, completed the roundabout journey that delayed his Angels debut.

"It's good to kind of have that light at the end of the tunnel," he said. "You know that you're working toward something and have that belief you can get back there."

## **\* *Associated Press***

### **Bemboom's hit on call-up day lifts Angels past Red Sox 5-4**

Anthony Bemboom finally lived his dream after a long day and a longer journey back to the Los Angeles Angels.

Bemboom hit a go-ahead single in the 10th inning after Kole Calhoun's solo homer tied it in the eighth, leading the Angels past the Boston Red Sox 5-4 Sunday for a split of their four-game series.

Called up earlier in the day from Triple-A Salt Lake, Bemboom flew into Boston from Des Moines, Iowa, arrived around noon and showed up at Fenway Park about 20 minutes before the first pitch.

A little less than 4 1/2 hours later, he grounded his hit to right.

"That's something you dream about -- think about when you get drafted with the team. In a way it happened," said Bemboom, standing in front of his black and gold Salt Lake Bees' equipment bag lying on the floor.

He was drafted by Los Angeles in the 22nd round of the 2012 amateur draft. After being taken by Colorado in the 2016 Rule 5 draft, he became a free agent and signed with Tampa Bay.

The 29-year-old catcher was up with the Rays earlier this year before Los Angeles purchased him from the Rays on July 16.

"We wouldn't have won it without him," Angels manager Brad Ausmus said.

Shohei Ohtani had three hits with a two-run single for Los Angeles, which won for only the second time in 10 games. The Angels had halted an eight-game losing streak Saturday and finished a nine-game trip 2-7.

Christian Vazquez hit a two-run homer for Boston, which rallied from an early 3-0 hole. Rafael Devers added two hits and started the front end of nifty 5-4-3 double play, making a backhanded stab on Albert Pujols' hard grounder.

"It's something we've been doing the whole season. We've been talking about it, been inconsistent," Boston manager Alex Cora said of the split. "That way, it's tough to make it to the playoffs."

The defending World Series champion Red Sox have blown 22 saves, tied for most in the majors, and are currently out a playoff spot.

Calhoun hit his leadoff homer off reliever Matt Barnes after Boston's bullpen held the Angels scoreless on two hits over 5 1/3 innings following a rough start by Andrew Cashner.

Bemboom hit his single off Ryan Weber (1-2) after Calhoun had a leadoff walk and advanced on a ground out and fly out.

Hansel Robles (4-0) got four outs for the victory.

Making his second big league start, Angels left-hander Patrick Sandoval gave up four runs in 4 2/3 innings. He was lifted with the bases loaded before Boston took a 4-3 lead on Max Stassi's passed ball on Ty Buttrey's pitch.

Los Angeles had built their edge with a run in the first on Pujols' double-play and Ohtani's single in the second before the Red Sox tied it.

Jackie Bradley Jr. drew a base-loaded walk in the second and Vazquez's shot -- that completely left Fenway Park over the Green Monster -- tied it in the fourth.

#### NICE GIFT

After Red Sox lefty Chris Sale finished his off-day throwing in the outfield and signed some autographs for fans in the stands along the right-field line about an hour before the game, he noticed a young boy in a wheelchair off in the distance with his mom and dad.

Sale approached the 6-year-old -- named Joey -- chatted for a while and gave him his glove before heading back into the clubhouse.

#### WILD THING

Cashner got just five outs, giving up three runs and three hits, walking five and left to loud boos when he was pulled.

"It was tough. I didn't really command my fastball," he said. "Five walks is never good. Didn't give us really a chance to win, but amazing job by the bullpen today."

#### THAT'S PEACHY

Marie Mansfield Kelley, who played for the Rockford Peaches of the women's professional baseball league from 1950-54, threw out the ceremonial first pitch.

#### TRAINER'S ROOM

Angels: Pujols was back in the lineup after having Saturday off. ... C Kevan Smith was placed on the 10-day injured list with a lumbar strain and Bemboom was recalled from Triple-A.

Red Sox: OF Mookie Betts had the day off before entering as a pinch runner and popping out in the 10th. ... Selected infielder Chris Owings from Triple-A Pawtucket and optioned RHP Hector Velazquez. The 27-year-old Owings was signed as a minor league free agent on June 17 and hit .325 with 11 homers in 44 games with Pawtucket. He batted leadoff with Betts out and went 0 for 5.

#### UP NEXT

Angels: LHP Jose Saurez (2-3, 6.22 ERA) is slated to start the opener of a three-game series against Pittsburgh at Angels Stadium. It's the Pirates' first visit since 2013.

Red Sox: LHP Eduardo Rodriguez (13-5, 4.17) is in line to start the opener of a three-game series in Cleveland on Monday. The Red Sox are 17-4 in his last 22 starts (with a suspended game on Wednesday included).